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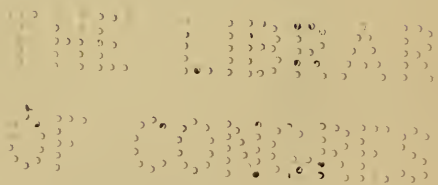




"OUT OF HARNESS"

Sketches, Narrative and Descriptive

By THOMAS GUTHRIE, D.D.



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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE EDINBURGH ORIGINAL RAGGED SCHOOL	1
NEW BRIGHTON	22
A WINTER GALE	36
THE STREETS OF PARIS. PART I.	59
" " PART II.	82
SUNDAY IN PARIS, AND FRENCH PROTESTANTISM	108
SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE:—	
I.—DR. CHALMERS AND THE COWGATE	127
II.—OLD HOUSES AND OLD INSCRIPTIONS	134
III.—THE BLIND ORGANIST	149
IV.—THE ORPHAN	167
V.—THE CONVICT. PART I.	184
" " PART II.	201
VI.—EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS	217
WINTER	258
AUTUMN	273
THE PEST, PROVIDENCE, AND PRAYER	292
WATCH-NIGHT	316
THE RECHABITES	338
UNFORGIVING AND UNFORGIVEN. PART I.	361
" " PART II.	374

THE EDINBURGH ORIGINAL RAGGED SCHOOL.

HOW IT WAS GOT UP, AND WHAT IT HAS DONE.



EDINBURGH, with the exception, perhaps, of some parts of Paris, is more full than any other town of interesting relics. Modern improvements easily clear away the brick walls that accommodate single families ; but massive piles of stone are not so easily removed. Rising six, ten, even twelve and fifteen storeys high, yielding large rents, and swarming with tenants, they long defy old time and modern taste. Built to last, if let alone, till the knell of doom, these old houses of Edinburgh have, with few exceptions, yielded to no element but fire—and a mighty blaze they make ! Such accidents, however, being of rare occurrence, that long, lofty, rock-looking ridge, which heaves its back up from the Castle down to Holyrood, has much the same aspect that it had three hundred years ago. Since then the actors are gone, but the stage remains, so little changed,

that were John Knox to rise from the dead (though Bishop Latimer would lose himself in modern London), he would feel much at home to-day in the High Street of Edinburgh. Recognising, as he went along, many lofty tenements and quaint old gables with fleur-de-lis and thistle, when he came near the Nether Bow he would find his old house not very much altered since the day he closed his good fight within its walls, and was carried, the city attending his funeral, to his grave beneath the shadow of St. Giles's crown.

Like Dumbarton, Stirling, Brechin, formerly all places of strength, the capital of Scotland owed its existence to its Castle rock. That formed its nucleus. In troublous times people naturally sought shelter under the wings of such a fortalice; and when invading foes swept the open country, and laid happy homesteads waste with fire and sword, the security it afforded, the asylum found within its walls, illustrate such expressions of Scripture as this, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." The High Street having begun at the Castle, and extending from it as the stem of a tree from its root, in that part which lies nearest the rock, as we might expect, its oldest and most interesting relics are found. There many visitors resort; and in autumn, when the New Town is all but deserted by its inhabitants, and the flocks on the rocky slopes of Arthur's Seat or the neighbouring Pentlands might do worse than try a day's pasture on the grass of our fashionable squares, many are the groups of bearded foreigners, and lean Americans, and rotund Englishmen that are to be

seen, with guide-book in hand, diving into the dark closes ; or spelling the black letter, or Greek, or Latin inscription above some low-browed door ; or gazing up at the lofty tenements where a foul, half-naked creature, with savage look, has thrust its unkempt head through a window from which, once on a day, fair maids of honour, lounging on velvet cushions, watched their gallants ride down the street to drive the English back across the border, or attend Court at Holyrood. Here, with scallop shell on their cloaks, lived knights who had fought for the Holy Sepulchre ; here, Mary of Guise, bringing the blood of persecution into the Stuart race, had her palace and held her gay Court ; here, rudely carved coronets mark the town houses of our oldest nobility ; here, " *Laus Deo* " on one house, " *Sedes manet optima cœlo* " on another, " Praised be the Lord my God, my Strength and my Redeemer," on another, speak of the reformation and the piety of its times ; while here, close under the Castle guns, on this broad esplanade, where loungers gather now to see raw recruits at the goose step, Edinburgh's old burghers met to see treason punished—Lord Forbes lose his head, Lady Glamis burned alive, and traitors of meaner degree, with men and women accused of witchcraft, perish at the fiery stake. In a neighbourhood so full of interesting associations, stands a modern building that disputes the public attention with the relics of the olden time. It is the Original Ragged School ; and with an open Bible (the arms of our faith) carved above its door, and nearly 300 children within its walls whom Christian charity has rescued from ruin, it forms

the most interesting object there to many. Leaving antiquarians to their dusty and dry researches, many have entered our school, saying, with Moses, "I will turn aside, and see this great sight;" and after visiting Palace, Castle, and the crowd of interesting objects of "mine own romantic town," they have left our Institution, pronouncing it the best sight in Edinburgh. I proceed to relate its history, its rise, its progress, and its success; in all which, the hand of Providence has so often appeared, that we may surely say of it, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

Holland is the only country that appears at the period of the Reformation to have anticipated an increase of population,—and provided for it. There the State enacted that whenever a parish added two thousand to its inhabitants, it should have an additional minister. But in Scotland there never was any such provision; such wise adaptation of Church and schools to the growth of the nation, as men might have been taught by God's works in nature, where the integument that covers our body stretches with their expansion, and trees shed their bark, and the serpent wriggles out of its old skin, and the crab throws off, like an ill-fitting coat, its last year's shell for one suited to a twelvemonth's growth. For instance, St. Cuthbert's or the West Church, once a country parish, lying on the skirts of Edinburgh, came to have the town extended into its fields till its population rose to 60,000 souls,—but never another church rose there. It was left with its one parish church, as if the petticoats of a child were fit clothing for a man. In this way, and in the

course of time, chiefly, indeed, in the last century—for Scotland never fairly started in the race of progress till the last hope of the Jacobites was quenched in blood on Drummoissie Moor—the population of our towns shot far ahead of the means of education and of religious instruction. There were no “children of Issachar which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.”

Another cause which largely contributed to the ignorance and irreligion that now pervade the lowest strata of our cities is found in the blight under which so many of the churches withered, and some of them all but died, in the last half of the eighteenth century. How low the state of morals and religion, even among the ministers of the gospel, revealed in the autobiography of Dr. Carlyle of Musselburgh! Think of that poor old man, on the verge of his grave, boasting how he had stemmed the tide of fanaticism, and crushed the bigotry which took offence at ministers being play-goers! It appears from his Memoirs that the leading clergy of Edinburgh were in the habit of spending their evenings at taverns, in the society of leading infidels; there men that professed to preach Christ, cracked their jokes and drank their claret with men who openly denied the Saviour, and gloried in their infidelity. “I,” said the Psalmist, “am a companion to all them that fear thee;” but in David Hume and Adam Smith the leading clergy had their bosom friends. So low, indeed, had the standard, not of religion, but of clerical decorum sunk, that the business of the General Assembly was arranged so as to allow the ministers during

its sittings to spend their evenings in the theatre. So says Dr. Carlyle. He was behind the scenes, and knew all about it. And thus, in a court, constituted in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, opened with prayer, dealing with the most solemn matters, these divines hurried through their business to be in time for the Play,—for the Farce at least ; seeking compensation for the dreary dulness of the forenoon's work in hearty laughter over *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This was very shocking ; nor are we less shocked to read how one, who professed high orthodoxy, dared to boast of the number of bottles of claret he could carry under his belt. How could this have ended but in the utter ruin of religion, in the loss of all that our godly fathers had suffered, fought, and died to attain, unless, in answer to the prayers of a few who sighed and cried over the abominations of the land, God had returned to visit the vine his own right hand had planted, and that the boar out of the field had wasted.

This race of clergy is now extinct, like those monstrous animals which belonged to a former epoch,—and from whose ravages the world is happily delivered. But they have left more than their foot-prints behind them. The mischief they did remains. To meet the wants of a growing population, the State did nothing for education ; the Church did less than nothing for religion ; and we have to reap the consequence of this neglect and apathy. They stand up there in thousands and tens of thousands, in our large towns who fear neither God, nor man ; who go neither to Church, nor chapel ; who respect neither

Sabbath, nor saint's day ; who neither can educate their children, nor care to educate them : who live in the most abject poverty, and indulge in the most shocking vices ; whose foul houses, hungry faces, and filthy rags are dreadful to look on in God's creatures ; and who die as insensible to the future as the beasts that have no future, and dying, perish.

This is a fair description of the great mass of the people among whom I was called to labour, as one of the ministers of the Old Greyfriars' parish. It was there that, many long years ago, I got my first glimpse of the rude, ignorant, and savage state of the children that always swarm thickest where the people are poorest. A student at College, I accompanied a friend to a Sabbath-school, which to accommodate an acquaintance he had undertaken to teach for that night. The room was large and dingy, dimly lighted with candles—there being no gas in those days. The door opened on such a set of ragamuffins as I had never seen before ; whooping, whistling, yelling, singing. By entreaties, and dint of perseverance, some order was at length established, and a psalm given out to sing. No Orpheus to charm these unruly spirits, my friend who could not sing, would sing ; and his cracked voice and nasal twang was the signal for such an uproar ! Poor fellow ! he was very good and patient ; he held on his way till he got to the end of the singing, and calling them to join in prayer, unfortunately closed his eyes. For a moment his reverent attitude, and the voice of prayer, seemed, like the voice of Jesus on the stormy waters, to produce a

great calm. But by-and-by I heard a curious noise, and shall not forget the sight which met my eyes on suddenly opening them ; there—and behind them a crowd of grinning faces, red with efforts to suppress their laughter—stood two ragged urchins, each holding a flaming candle under my friend's nose, and I could not help thinking that there was a wicked cleverness in this ; for it so happened that this feature of his face always, and especially on that winter night, looked very cold.

Then I wondered at the wickedness and rudeness of these boys, but I had not been three weeks ministering in the College Wynd and Cowgate, when I saw what accounted for it ; and wonder was changed to pity. Of the first 150 I visited in the Old Greyfriars' parish, going from door to door, certainly not more than five attended any place of worship. I wandered in those houses for whole days without ever seeing a Bible, or indeed any book at all. I often stood in rooms bare of any furniture ; where father, mother, and half a dozen children had neither bed nor bedding, unless a heap of straw and dirty rags huddled in a corner could be called so. I have heard the wail of children crying for bread, and their mother had none to give them. I have seen the babe pulling breasts as dry as if the starved-looking mother had been dead. I have known a father turn his step-daughter to the street at night—bidding the sobbing girl who bloomed into womanhood, earn her bread there as others were doing. I have bent over the foul pallet of a dying lad to hear him whisper how his father and mother—who were sitting half drunk by the fireside—

had pulled the blankets off his body to sell them for drink. I have seen children blanched like plants growing in a cellar—for weeks they never breathed a mouthful of fresh air for want of rags to cover their nakedness ; and I used often to observe in these dingy dwellings, where the air is poison, and the food is scanty, and the cold is bitter, and short is the gleam of sunshine, and they live in continual terror of a drunken father or mother, and where when they cry they are not kissed but beaten, that the children have an air of sadness, and look as if they never smiled. I don't recollect of ever seeing a mother in these wretched dwellings dandling her infant, or of hearing the little creature crow or laugh as he leapt with joy. There, infants have no toys ; and mothers' smiles are rare as sunshine. Nobody can know the misery I suffered amid those scenes of human wretchedness, woe, want, and sin.

But the misery into which I had plunged was not, thank God ! suffered in vain. They say, a prophet is prepared in a fiery furnace ; and these years of suffering prepared me to do such service as I have rendered to the Ragged School cause. I became acquainted with the condition of the poorest of the poor ; and learned to pity, much more than to blame them. I was taught, by many bitter disappointments, and profitless efforts to change the adults, that, though nothing is impossible with God, the best hope of raising the sunken masses lay in working on the rising generation ; and I was brought to the conclusion, that unless the yawning gulf which separates these children from education is bridged over

by a loaf of bread—unless, in other words, they are fed as well as educated at school—they must remain begging, or stealing, or starving ; to sink, if that is possible, into deeper depths of ignorance and crime.

In 1841, Sheriff Watson had set up a Ragged School in Aberdeen ; and not very long afterwards an opportunity, though not of my seeking, occurred of repeating his experiment in Edinburgh. The congregation of Free St. John's, after building their church, found themselves in possession of a large room in its under-ground story. We had to consider to what good purpose it could be turned. It was proposed by some to open a Free Church school there. To this I and others objected, on the ground that there was already an adequate number of common schools in the neighbourhood ; and that a school below our church could only be filled at the expense of these, and to the injury of their teachers. The neighbourhood swarmed with hundreds of ragged children who—obliged to steal, or beg their food, or starve—neither went, nor could go, to any common school ; and with the view of saving a few of these, I proposed that the congregation should set up and maintain a ragged, feeding, industrial school, for some twenty or thirty waifs. The proposal was agreed to ; and orders were given for the necessary apparatus of soup-boiler and porridge-pot. But the morning came ; and schemes sometimes, as well as spangles, look different in day from what they do in gas or candlelight. Some of our office-bearers got, and not very unnaturally, alarmed at the responsibilities we were about to incur ; and in conse-

quence the attempt was abandoned. But the hope of saving poor creatures from the wreck was too dear, and had been too nearly realised to be abandoned without a further struggle. Baffled in this direction another lay open to me. I might leave the limits of St. John's congregation, and of the Free Church, to launch out on the open sea ; I might throw myself on the Christian public, irrespective of sect or party ; for were these children saved, it was nothing to me to what church they might attach themselves, or whose arm plucked them from destruction. Having undertaken to come forward with 70*l.* for supporting a Ragged School under our church, and not having 70*l.* nor 7*l.* to spare, I had, with the view of appealing to friends for aid, laid down the keel of my First Plea. Let no man think poverty an unmitigated evil ; for if I had been able to spare 70*l.*, I had never projected a Plea, nor run the risk of being crushed in the Press. And let no man lose heart, and abandon a good scheme because he meets chopping seas and cross winds at the outset, since God may be thereby driving him on a better course, and toward greater ends than he ever dreamt of. On my little pet scheme being abandoned, I said, in the bitterness of my heart, " All these things are against me ; " but God, who had planned a much greater and more catholic enterprise, was saying, " My ways are not as your ways ; and my thoughts are not as your thoughts."

The Plea was at length prepared and published. It fell on Edinburgh as falls a spark into a powder magazine. The public mind had been prepared for the

scheme ; and, like a great mountain stone, which rains and melting snows had been silently undermining for years, it only needed a push to set the mass in motion. Leaving him that moved it to wonder at the effect, away it went—taking grand, joyful bounds, and bearing all before it. All men were ready to sing over the birth of this Christian enterprise. They hailed the proposal to establish it on a broad, unsectarian basis. The judges of the land, who had long mourned in secret over the practical injustice of the law, and public prosecutors who had reluctantly placed infants at the bar, and asked for sentence on creatures more fit to be pitied than punished, were among the foremost with offers of support ; all sectarian feelings were engulfed in a flowing tide of common love and pity ; and money poured in on us in shoals of letters, some bearing the stamp of coronets, and some the stamp of thimbles.

At length our schools were opened with an attendance of two score boys and girls ; and, as these were broken in, we increased the number. They all received three good meals ; they came to school before breakfast, and left it after supper ; they went through daily ablutions : they were trained so many hours to work, and led out so many to walk ; they were taught to read, write, and cypher ; they received religious instruction—reading, and being examined on the Bible. Our superintendent, Mr. Gibb, soon won their affections, and was himself a prince of teachers. Our Committee of Management, consisting of Episcopalians and Established Churchmen, United Presbyterians and Free Churchmen,

Baptists and Independents, worked together in happy harmony ; and for a while we had fulfilled to us the beautiful prayer of an Indian chief, "May your council fire never go out, and may your sky be without a cloud." The cloud came at length, and brought a storm. It happened thus. Nearly half of the wretched outcasts whom we had gathered into the school, and were saving from a life of crime and misery, were the children of nominal Roman Catholics. Some of these had no parents ; and those who had, belonged to a class of Papists that had sunk like too many of their nominally Protestant neighbours into practical heathenism. These children, all foul and ragged, were taught to beg and steal, or left to starve ; nor until we made an effort to save them, had either prelate or priest done else than leave them to their fate—passing by on the **other** side. I never, indeed, literally saw a priest pass by on the other side, for, though my almost daily walk, some twenty years ago, was in the Cowgate, I never saw a priest there at all. They might have had other duties to do than to go forth like the good shepherd after their lost sheep. But so it was. The girls were left to grow up prostitutes, and the boys to become thieves. So soon, however, as these poor children were gathered into our school, and taught to read God's blessed Word, Popery rose to rescue them from so great a danger. Father Keenan of Dundee was careless enough to show the cloven foot. He in effect boldly stated that he would prefer to see the children perish in the streets rather than get food and education and God's Word in the Dundee Ragged Schools : "For

Heaven's sake," exclaimed this zealot, as if he could be ignorant that these creatures had no faith, and grew up polluted from their earliest years, "let them, spotless and with unshaken faith, perish to the world, rather than live in abundance, purchased at such risk, and perish eternally!" In Edinburgh, the tools of Rome, keeping behind the scenes, acted with more caution, shrewdly guessing that grand speeches from the lips of Popish priests, on behalf of toleration and religious liberty, would sound *queer* to those who had read of the fires of Smithfield and St. Andrew's, of the tortures of the Inquisition, and the bloody massacre of St. Bartholomew.

I have no wish to rake up the ashes of an old controversy; and since most of those with whom we had to fight are in their graves, it would be unseemly to exult over their defeat. *Requiescat in pace.* We insisted that every child in our school should read and be instructed daily in the Word of God, without asking the priest's leave—whether he would or would not. We held *that* to be the really sectarian school that excludes the Bible from all or any; even as the Popish is really the sectarian decalogue, since it excludes the Second Commandment—and to make up the ten, splits the tenth into two. The gentleman who headed the opposition was incautious enough to state in his speech, as I heard with my own ears, and an astonished public heard with theirs, and the newspapers reported—although the statement was omitted in his revised speech—that when in Ireland he had been told by Roman Catholics themselves, "that for a consideration they would rather be guilty of shooting a man,

than of eating flesh on Friday ;” and the thrill of horror with which this was heard, proved that the citizens of Edinburgh would never consent to have the children they had adopted served with such “ serpent ” food. We held that in a Ragged School, whatever might be the case in other schools, the object aimed at could not be accomplished without the pure milk of God’s Word for these babes, and that the principle—although some good men among our opponents seemed to have lost sight of it in the dust of battle—was the irreconcilable and eternal difference between Protestantism and Popery ; the principle that God has addressed His Word to all the human family. We held firmly to this, that its free use is as much man’s heaven-bestowed right, as the free use of God’s air and sun. Holding that no party, whether priest or presbyter, has any right to interfere between a parent and child, and holding also, that in having adopted these children whom we clothed, fed, and educated, we were placed to them *in loco parentis*—in the position of parents—we felt as much bound to instruct them as to instruct our own children in the saving truths of the Gospel. We had entered on the solemn responsibility of being their “ keepers ;” and there lies the plain difference between the position of the directors of a Ragged School, and that of the patrons or managers of ordinary schools. Well, the dispute between us and those, who, some of them not intending it, fought for Popish intolerance, was referred on their motion to the decision of an Edinburgh public. The city was stirred to its depths : the Music Hall was filled to overflowing ;

and, after a fair stand-up fight for four hours before the leading men of Edinburgh on the platform, and a magnificent audience in the area and gallery of the house, the question was put to the vote. I have seen nothing more glorious than the forest of hands that rose up to approve our principles, and few things so ludicrous as the five hands raised on the other side—a feeling which they indeed seemed to share to whom the hands belonged ; for, greeted with a peal of laughter, the hands went down like a duck in the water at the shot of a gun. There was great joy that day in Edinburgh ; and many who, like Eli, had been trembling for the Ark of God, when they saw us come back, with colours flying, from the field of a most important victory, gave thanks to Him to whom we sung, “Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.”

Relieved from the presence of those between whom and us there could be no concord, our course since has been one of unbroken harmony and marvellous success.

The wretched condition of the children to whom our school has opened its arms, is set forth in the following table, taken from one of our early Reports :—

Found homeless, and provided with lodgings	72
Children with both parents	32
With the father dead	140
Mother dead	89
Deserted by parents	43
With one or both parents transported.	9
Fatherless, with drunken mothers	77
Motherless, with drunken fathers	66

With both parents worthless	84
Who have been beggars	271
Who have been in the Police Office.	75
Who have been in Prison	20
Known as children of thieves	76
Believed to be so, including the preceding	148

What is this but a modern edition of the prophet's roll, written within and without, with "lamentation, and mourning, and woe?"

The results of our School are to be found in many happy homes, the abodes of those that, once wretched, ragged outcasts, are now honest men and virtuous mothers, useful citizens and heads of families; and we have good reason to believe that some whom we picked from the dust-heap, plucked from the very gutter, are now shining in heaven, gems in a Saviour's crown. But so far as the results are very palpable matters of fact, they may be summed up under these three heads:—

I. We—and in these results I include the influence of other, though smaller schools—have cleared the streets of Edinburgh of juvenile beggars,—a feat the Magistrates and Police, with cells and prison at their back, were so far from ever being able to achieve, that, when our School was set on foot, their name was Legion. They swarmed through all the town—it was creeping with them.

II. We are fast emptying the prisons. If, as they say, "seeing is believing," look at the following tables:—

"Our school was opened in the summer of 1847, but could not, of course, tell much on the returns of that year.

In 1847 the centesimal proportion of children under 14									
years of age in prison was									5.6
1848	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3.7
1849	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2.9
1850	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1.3
1851	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.9
1858	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1.7
1859	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1.2

“There has been also a remarkable decrease in the commitments of prisoners from fourteen to sixteen years of age.

The number of prisoners between 14 and 16 years of									
age was, in									
1848	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	552
1849	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	440
1850	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	361
1851	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	227
1858	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	138
1859	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	130”

I have it from gentlemen, members of Prison Boards, that the most remarkable feature of our time is the steady and even rapid decrease of crime—a most gratifying circumstance, and one which those most competent to judge attribute chiefly to the influence of Ragged and Reformatory Schools. A part of our gaols will by-and-by be to let; and already our gaolers are suffering from *ennui*. A gentleman in an official position told me the other day, that a large gaol in the west of Scotland having been found too large for the common class of prisoners, a part of it had been appropriated to convicts; and having some of that class to find room for, he went to this gaol to see whether they could be accommodated

there. He knocked—the grim door opened—and a very dull, sad, and *gruesome*-looking man appeared. On my acquaintance telling who he was, and what he called for, the countenance of the gaoler instantly lighted up, as when one lets on the full stream of gas,—he was so happy at the prospect of getting something to do—of getting idle time off his hands.

III. The Original Ragged School alone has rescued from great misery and certain ruin not less than five hundred children. They are now blessings to society. This number does not include the many who have received at our school a partial education, nor that considerable number whose parents, finding their circumstances improved, have removed them from ours to higher schools. I have heard statistics of Ragged Schools of the *coulleur-de-rose* kind. They were too good to be true; and a cause which needs not the help of exaggeration is only damaged by such displays of imposition or credulity. The statistics I give may be thoroughly trusted. Now, of those five hundred children, who are, take them all in all, playing their part well in life, let us suppose that but one-half had run a career in crime. That is a very low supposition, but take it. Since every criminal costs the country on an average 300*l.*, the State, before it has done with punishing them, would have incurred an expense of 75,000*l.* What have we saved the public purse by saving these children? Our school, during its twelve years' existence, has been maintained at an outlay of some 24,000*l.* Sinking, therefore, all considerations of a humane, moral, and religious kind,

and looking only to the pounds, shillings, and pence view of the case, we have saved the country a sum equal to the difference between 24,000*l.* and 75,000*l.*, which is 51,000*l.* And if we make the much more probable supposition, that but for our school—its useful, kind, and holy training—two-thirds of those five hundred children would have developed into full-blown criminals, we have saved the country not less than 72,000*l.*


It is strange and sad that I should have to charge our Government with a niggardly treatment of schools they should have fostered, patronized, and liberally supported as one of the most holy and blessed remedies for evils that it baffled the whole power of the State to cure. What it could not do with its gallows, its prisons, its police, and penal settlements, we have done. The light of education, the knowledge of the Gospel, the kindness of Christian hands, and the love of Christian hearts, have conquered those that defied the boasted terrors of the law. The devil-possessed whom chains could not bind is there—sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. One would think that those who saved the lost, and helped the neediest, would have shared most largely of the funds the country puts into the hands of the Privy Council for promoting the interests of education. But, strange to say, the rule of the Government seems to be, to give much to educate those that need little help, and little to educate those who need much. A sum of 1,200,000*l.* is voted by Parliament for the purposes of education ; and while hundreds of thousands go to educate children whose parents are in circumstances

to give them a fair education at their own expense, all the help we receive is *half a farthing* per day for each child we save from a life of misery and crime. Mockery, and miserable economy! Surely a Christian country will rise to remonstrate against the State—to use the words of Lord Brougham—abdicating one of its most important duties. Our employment is eminently like His who came to **seek** and to save the lost; and who put into the mouth of the prodigal's father, words so descriptive of these reclaimed outcasts, "This my **son** that was dead is alive again, that was lost is found." Governments may turn a deaf ear to our petitions; though, when we have burst the bands of red tape, and breaking through the outer circle of mere officials, have got our case fairly set before them, I hope better things of men in power. Meanwhile let the prayers and liberality of all baptized into the spirit of Jesus support us; this be the picture of their life:—

" I live for those that love me,
For those that know me true,
For the heaven that smiles above **me**,
And waits my coming too,

" For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrongs that need resistance,
For the future in the distance,
For the good that I **can do**."

NEW BRIGHTON.

 **N** ill-humour with our Government for declining his master's invitation to the European Congress, Emile Girardin has charged our country with the "fury and perfidy of the sea." We rose from reading this libel to take a forenoon saunter along the sands of New Brighton. The ocean lay before us wrapped in a gray haze, quiet as a mill pond, its wavelets hardly stirring the few empty shells on the beach, making Girardin's description appear as inappropriate as its application was ill-natured. Not many hours thereafter, and we acknowledged him to be, though not a historian, a poet—the sea was foaming, mad with rage, and leaping on the land as if it would swallow it up; while gallant ships, beguiled out of port by its placid face, were perishing on thundering lee-shores, reefs, and sunken sand-banks.

New Brighton, where we sojourned during this tremendous gale—of which more anon—lies at the mouth of the Mersey, whence the shore trends westward to the sands sung of by Kingsley in "Call the cattle home," and onward to where the great Ormes Head looks down

on Beaumaris' beautiful bay. The town is a distant suburb of Liverpool. Rising from the beach, it spreads itself over some high grounds which, though wearing a thick coat of sand, appear to rest on the ridge of soft red rock that forms a neighbouring, low, bluff headland, called the Red Noses. With a vulgar name this headland is rather picturesque—the sea having carved it with fretwork, and hollowed its front with caves. It is not, however, to any resemblance which these bear to nostrils that it owes a name more suggestive of stronger liquids than water—fresh or salt. Untutored man clothes common thoughts in lively metaphors, his own body supplying not a few of them. Hence, retaining the imaginative language of old times, we speak of the brow of a cliff, the foot of a mountain, the breast of a hill, the mouth of a river, and the arms of the sea. Hence also probably the use of the name of that feature, which, though giving much of its character, and beauty also, to the countenance, no poet with the exception of Solomon has ventured to sing. Discovering a resemblance to it in those parts of the land which project themselves sharply out into the sea, our fathers called them Noses—an expression still recognisable in the names of Sheerness, Stromness, and many other coast places between Orkney and the Land's End.

The shore here stretches a long way westward, forming an admirable promenade for foot or horseback exercise. It is faced with no bank of pebbles to give out the music when the wave, having spent its fury on the shore, sucks back the rattling shingle; and it has few shells, beyond

those furnished by a mussel bed, which rises at ebb-tide above the water, and looks like a long, low, black reef. Adorned with sea anemones, it reminds one of the words of Southey:—

“ Here, too, were living flowers,
Which, like a bud compacted,
Their purple heads contracted,
And now, in open blossoms spread,
Stretch’d, like green anthers, many a seeking head.”

They are squatted in great numbers on this bank, and hold joyous revel on the mussels. Repulsive as they look when closed up, and covered with sand and mud, it is said that these polypes, “boiled in sea-water, acquire a firm and palatable consistence,” making a dish fit for an epicure. The Italians eat them; so might the natives of Normandy, who luxuriate on snail soup, and so—but for our prejudices—might we, who devour live oysters.

Seaward of New Brighton lie formidable sand-banks, over which the waves often run in tremendous breakers. They are the grave of many a poor sailor, and at the moment of writing this, amid the rattle of windows and the roar of wind and waters, the keepers of our light-house are signalling Liverpool that two vessels are aground on them; and we wait anxiously for tugs and life-boats to come, hasting to the rescue. This shore, as there are no reefs on the coast, presents few of the seaweeds which give so much interest to many other shores, and form those submarine forests on which, lying over the side of our boat on a sunny day, we have never wearied looking, as we watched their graceful waving in

the gentle swell, and the many beautiful, with some odd-looking, creatures that swam or crawled among them. Almost the only things like seaweeds are not seaweeds, but a variety of marine zoophytes ; each in its form and symmetrical arrangement rivalling the most graceful productions of the vegetable world. One of these, a *Sertularia*, appears under the microscope as a branched stalk; set on each side with cup-like processes. Each cup holds a living creature, which, by protruding a row of ciliæ or fringed-like processes from its circular mouth, causes a rotatory motion in the water, and thus draws in the animalculæ which are its daily bread. The whole stem, which is fixed to rock, or shell, or seaweed, goes by the name of a Polypidom, or house of Polyps. One house in my old parish in Edinburgh, No. 8, Cowgate Head, swarmed with a hundred inhabitants, but some of these Polypidoms count theirs by thousands and tens of thousands. Though perhaps sometimes "out of harness," they are never out of house. The benefits as well as pleasures of travelling are unknown to them ; though near neighbours, they are not neighbourly ; and, never leaving their own narrow sphere to expatiate in the broad sea, these polyps get, no doubt, very contracted in their views, and may be regarded as types of those men and women who, placed, or placing themselves, in similar circumstances, are bigots—seeing nothing to commend, nothing to imitate, outside their own Church, country, or party. These creatures are allied to those which form the coral of ladies' ornaments and babies' rattles. They are polyps also, and build those abodes of theirs we call

coral, of the lime which the water holds in solution, and which they have the power of extracting. Exceedingly interesting objects under the microscope, they fill even the naked eye with wonder and delight. A ship—~~no~~ low, black, smoking steamer—but a three-master, with her fine lines and tall tapering spars, and a cloud of snow-white canvas, spread out to the sunshine, ploughing the waves, and throwing them in sheets of foam from her bows, is perhaps of all man's works the most imposing ; the most beautiful triumph of his art. In her we walk the waters, and ride on the wind ; yet what a poor invention compared with the lowest creature of God's hand in the blue depths below her keel ! Wrecked, crushed, torn, dead on the beach, they are beautiful even in death, and recall to thoughtful minds such words as these :—"O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, where are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships ; there is that Leviathan whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon Thee ; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season."

Grand words these ! Surely philosophers, if they would not expose science to suspicion, and themselves to the contempt of even vulgar minds, should leave it to the fool to say, "There is no God !"

Among other objects of interest, this beach has **one** which is at once a convenience to the inhabitants, and a **great** curiosity to visitors. There are fresh-water springs, which rise out at sea off the coast of America. Probably

supplied from internal reservoirs in the Andes, they gush up in such volume, and with such force, as to burst the foundations of the great deep, and form a fountain of fresh water in the midst of a salt sea—as much to the comfort of ships which, it is said, sometimes water there, as to the discomfort of fish, that, living in pickle, must wonder, on getting into these sweet waters, where they are. Nearer home, the Bass Rock—a place interesting, politically, as the last spot of British ground which stood up in 1688 for the House of Stuart, and no less interesting, ecclesiastically, to Scotchmen at least, as the Patmos, in whose dungeons the Covenanters were immured—has a spring of fresh water near its summit. This surprised us more than the myriads of Solan geese that whiten its dark crags, and, bold as free, show fight when you approach their nests. One little looks for such a thing on a mass of basalt that lies about four miles out at sea, and has been shot up by volcanic fires some hundred feet above the billows which go roaring through its caves. It, no doubt, owes this strange fresh-water spring to some connection with the Pentland or Lammermoor hills. Cloud condensers these, they thus, in a type of heavenly blessings, ministered to the good, brave men to whom—certain modern detractors and caricaturists, who kick at the dead lion, notwithstanding—our country owes her noblest rights—rights sought from God in their prayers, and bought with their blood. Now the sands of New Brighton boast a spring which, as a natural curiosity, rivals that on the Bass. It rises among the salt sea sand. It is buried twice a day below the waves ; yet its water

is fresh and sweet as that which shepherds drink at a mountain mossy well. Soon after the tide has retired, this curious spring clears itself of all brackishness—image of the grace which, rising in a Christian's heart, "a well of water springing up into everlasting life," casts out impurities. It is called the Widow's Well; and thereby hangs a tale of English kindness:—

A gentleman, taking pity on a woman who had been left destitute by the death of her husband, turned the spring into her means of living—teaching us that if there is a will to do kindnesses, a way will be found. He cleared the spring of sand; sank a barrel, with its head and bottom knocked out, over it; and installed the widow there with table and glasses to supply the visitors and earn their douceurs. So, since this barrel did not waste, he made it, in a way, as good to her as was, to another widow, that of which it is written that "the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah." In making provision for widows, I have regretted to see that people are not always so wise in England. Tap-rooms and beer-shops, which fill the pages of its provincial newspapers with loathsome details of crime, are places over which "lone women" are surely unfit to preside; and the number of widows, south the border, licensed to keep these "drunkeries" has always appeared to me more creditable to English sympathy than English sense.

Of that water "of which if a man drink he shall never thirst," New Brighton suffers no lack; but enjoys, on the

contrary, a full and very admirable supply. We have tried all the wells ; worshipping in the Episcopalian, Congregational, and Wesleyan Churches. Nor, though unaccustomed to instrumental music in church, was our enjoyment of the services disturbed by the organs of the two first, or the modest harmonium of the last. Being placed in a pew which commanded a partial sight of the organ-blower, and of his head and shoulders going up and down at every blast of the bellows, like the piston of a steam-engine, I was only disturbed by my sympathy for this official. While others were singing, I fancied he must be groaning ; and could not but wish that in all churches, as in some, where an organ is used, the power of steam, or water, was employed to supply wind to the pipes.

Among the Methodists we had the opportunity of hearing their "local preachers," as they are called. This is a class to which all their ministers must at one time have belonged. Nor are any recognised as "locals" till they have proved themselves, by a twelvemonths' trial, able to address men in a way both interesting and instructive—which was just what the Scotch woman pronounced wanting in a poor preacher of whom she said that he was neither "edifyin nor divertin." It is after a young man has gone through this ordeal that he goes into regular training for the ministry, and not till then. Now, whatever objections may lie to the plan in respect of its details, the idea appears a sound one. As a recruit is not admitted into the army, and sent to drill, till it has been ascertained that he possesses the physical properties

which fit him to be an efficient soldier, so, by the application of an adequate test, the churches should try whether men possess those properties and powers which will make them efficient preachers, before they are put into regular training for the ministry. The timely application of such a test would go far to protect congregations from inefficient preachers ; and also save men the pain of discovering, when too late, that they have mistaken their profession—a mistake well described by a shrewd countryman, who, talking to me of his minister, said,—that when he left the plough for the Church, the parish lost the best ploughman, and got the worst minister, it ever had.

Queer stories are told of these “locals”—how they violate the rules of grammar, and commit shocking murders of the Queen’s English. Years ago, at Leamington, I heard an excellent specimen of this class discoursing on the character of Noah. He quite charmed me by his piety, good sense, and genuine, though rude, eloquence. There was no mistaking the ring of the true metal ; but for a moment the spell was broken and my gravity lost, when, having shown the Patriarch to have been an heir of grace, he, dropping the *n*, and sounding out the *h* of “an heir,” rose to the climax with this rapturous exclamation : “My friends, my friends, Noah was a hare !” Such blunders, no doubt, the “local” preachers occasionally fall into ; yet, sneer at them who may, they have done much good, and are worthy of “double honour.” They do not “eat the bread of idleness.” Engaged in secular employments to support themselves and their families for six days of the week, on the seventh they

leave their homes to dispense the "bread of life" without fee or reward. Often trudging on long journeys through mud, and rain, and storm, they are worthy representatives of the men who in Wesley's days were "ministers of God's Word in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in strifes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." The Churches cannot dispense with an educated ministry; still, the preaching of some of these men might recommend to educated clergymen the careful cultivation of that natural oratory which, in these "locals," often more than makes up for their ignorance of mathematics and metaphysics, of Greek and Latin, and of any other language than their own mother tongue. Another peculiarity worthy of note, and certainly of imitation, among the Methodists, is the fervour and universality with which they join in the Psalmody. They take great delight in this part of divine worship; nor leave it, as is often done by others, to choirs and hired performers—and making good this saying of one of themselves, "The Episcopalians have carried off the praying, and the Presbyterians the preaching, so we Methodists have had to take up the singing."

In all its physical features, New Brighton is a place where even *ennui* might fall in love with life. The mouth of the river is often alive with vessels of all shapes and sizes:—shrimp and pilot boats; sloops and schooners; brigs and barques; steamers,—some moved silently through the water by their screws, others making the air resound with the *thud* of their paddles; ships of

heaviest burden, gay with flags, with sails bright and full as the plumage of a swan, homeward or outward bound—all floating on a tide which, whether stealing gently up to your feet as if to kiss them, or thundering in with breakers that burst in explosions of spray on the headlands or dash themselves foaming on the beach, is an object of perpetual interest. A place for the lady who said, "O, how I do love the sea when I am on the land!"—it is particularly suitable for such invalids as, from age or infirmity, are "afraid of that which is high." In its broad, firm sands, it offers them an advantage not to be found in many more lovely places on this coast—surveyed by us under very peculiar circumstances. The story may be told as a warning to travellers, in the words of the Scotch proverb, to "look before they leap:"—

We left this place one day for Bangor, intending to return the next. In the railway-carriage we began to compare, not notes, but purses; and were dismayed to find ourselves short of money. Most awkward dilemma!—what was to be done? Necessity is the mother of invention; we might pawn our watches; or we might summon the landlady, and bid her judge whether we looked like sharpers, or decent, though unfortunate, people whom she might trust. "As," to use a common saying, "ill-luck would have it," we had neither letter, nor envelope, to establish our identity; and, instead of portmanteau with brass plate and name, only a borrowed, black, nameless, leathern bag—not in keeping with such persons as we professed to be, but looking rather like an

article such as hotel-plunderers travel with to carry off silver plate. What black ruminations and grave whisperings were ours, as we bowled along to certain beggary and probable disgrace. Though I fancied our presence was somewhat more impressive than that of an Edinburgh lawyer who once had to make such an appeal as we had in view, yet his fate stuck like a bone in my throat. Going on horseback to a dinner-party, this worthy gentleman found himself barred by a turnpike, and a demand for twopence. He had not a penny in his pocket; but gave tongue in lieu of money—opening his case with counsellor-like glibness, and closing it with a promise to pay. The gruff warder was not to be so taken in; and planted himself firmly before the man of briefs. They wrangled; and the lawyer, at length losing temper in this passage of arms, turned round on the other, and, drawing himself up, said, “Look at me, sir; do I look like a man who would cheat you?” Whereupon the gate-keeper measured him from head to heel; and then held out his hand to say, “Let’s see the twopence!” Haunted by this story, we drove on to the George Hotel, and, anxious to know our fate, instantly asked to see the landlady. She was engaged at the time; and, though feeling somewhat as a man who, on going to a dentist’s to have a tooth extracted, has to wait half an hour, there was nothing for it but to have patience—and enjoy our dinner as we best could. At table I could not help thinking of those penniless fellows, sad rogues, who, shifting their quarters daily, dine in London coffee-houses; and, though always meeting the bill with a promise to

pay, are not believed, but hauled up before the Lord Mayor. Not that we could entirely sympathise with their sufferings; having found, on rummaging purses and pockets, money enough for our instant return by the last train, and at the lowest fare. However, things did not come to that pass. On our excellent landlady appearing, and hearing matters explained, she laughed heartily at our dilemma, and, pulling out what a child called "a fat purse," offered us gold at demand. "All is well that ends well,"—so says the proverb—but the experiment is dangerous; and elsewhere than in city mobs it is well to remember the policeman's warning, Ladies and gentlemen, look to your purses!

Yo-yo-yo, coming in long-drawn musical sounds over the quiet morning sea from a noble ship, which with every yard of canvas spread out on bowsprit, mizen, main, and foremast, is now entering the Mersey on her way to Liverpool, prompts me to write sailor-wise; but having "spun so long a yarn" about this place, I must now conclude. A pleasant sight it must be to see this beach crowded on Saturday afternoons, and summer holidays, with lads and lasses, and honest men, the strong sinews of our country, accompanied by their "belongings"—bright-looking wives, and groups of merry children. These find refreshment in wooden booths, ranged along the beach; whose "Signs," being neither bottles of whisky nor foaming jugs of porter, say much for the sober habits of the bulk of the people. "Hot Water" stands painted on their walls in great, white, staring letters. Hot Water! associated as these words used to be

in our mind with the manufacture of whisky toddy, they at first startled us ; but a near approach dissipated all fears. I learned with great satisfaction that it is the admirable practice of many of the working-classes on these occasions to bring tea and coffee with them. Instead of repairing for refreshments, so called, to beer-shops or tap-rooms, they resort to these booths to prepare and enjoy "the cup that cheers but not inebriates" ; and so, in these houses, where hot water, tea and coffee, ham and eggs, stand in happy and harmless association, they find "public-houses" which, holding no licence, lead to no licentiousness. It made one happy to see in these "Signs" the signs of a general sobriety, and sound arguments in favour of holidays for those whose hard yet happy lot it is, to work to live and live to work. Wisely managed, such holidays would contribute much to the enjoyments of the working-classes, and eminently conduce also to the quiet and holy rest of the Lord's day—to answer that prayer offered in all Episcopal Churches, when on the Ten Commandments being read, according to their excellent practice, every Sabbath, all the people, at the fourth as at the others, respond, saying, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law !"

A WINTER GALE.

“What happy gale
Blows you to Padua here from old Verona?”—SHAKESPEARE.

“Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann’d
From their soft wings and Flora’s earliest smells.”—MILTON.



SINCE the days of these grand old poets, or that still earlier period when, a synonym for singing, it gave its name to the nightingale, the word “gale” has changed its meaning. Ignorant of this, an unfortunate preacher who was on one occasion officiating in a seaport town, prayed that the husbands, sons, and brothers of those before him, then at sea, might have “*propitious gales*.” The storm of indignation this raised among the women was to him incomprehensible, as it may be to some of our readers who think that he was guilty of no offence but the very bad taste of using pompous language in prayer. This, however, was not the “front of his offending” with these women. A simple and primitive race, they might have found no great fault with the use of terms passing their understanding—any more than the honest woman who, on being asked whether she under-

stood one whom she pronounced a grand preacher, replied, "*D'ye think I wad presume to understand him? Na, na!*" Gales they understood too well. It was in a gale that Johnny Flucker's father was lost. It was in a gale that Jenny Swanson lost her husband, and in another her two lads. It was a gale that sank four fishing boats with all their crews in sight of distracted wives and weeping children on the beach; filling the little fishing town, where all the families intermarried with each other, with lamentation, mourning, and woe. They did not understand "*propitious*"; but that only added fuel to the flames. Their alarmed fancies imagined it something particularly bad; for what else could come from the lips of a man who prayed for "gales."

This story illustrates one of the peculiarities of those who go down to the sea in ships. Their vocabulary differs, as much as their habits, from that of landmen. Last summer, for example, we crossed to the Orkneys, where we met for the first time an Atlantic swell; the waves—long, lofty, majestic ridges of water—came rolling from the coasts of Labrador to dash themselves in sheets of foam on the gigantic cliffs of Hoy. We took a rough measurement of their height, and found that when our little steamer was down in the trough of the sea, the top of the wave was not less than twenty or thirty feet above us. The wind was in keeping with the waves; most of those aboard were prostrate on the deck; yet, according to our excellent captain, with whom we talked as we watched the gambols of a "school" of whales, it only blew "rather fresh." One night, years ago, we encoun-

tered still fouler weather in the Channel. "Steward! Steward!" had been called out in all the notes of the gamut; the passengers had been sick as dogs; glasses had been rattling, doors slamming, timbers groaning; wedged firmly into our berth, we had been marvelling all night long how the steward and cabin boy kept their feet as they steered their course across the floor—ministering angels in this scene of wretchedness; and, on arriving at St. Helier's, men and women came from below, pale and wan as ghosts; yet to our exclamation on leaving, "A stormy voyage, captain!" we got no other answer but "blew rather fresh," or "a bit of a sea." Sailors are slow to speak ill of their element. Storm, tempest, and hurricane are terms almost unknown to their vocabulary. The word they ordinarily use for these is the fine, poetical term employed by the unfortunate preacher who prayed for "gales;" and they mark the character of the storm by such modifications of it as a whole gale, or half a gale.

The nature of those atmospherical commotions, which are so destructive to life and property both at sea and land, is now pretty well understood; and may be made intelligible to those who know little of science, by a familiar illustration. In a bright summer's day, when the heat is scorching and the air a dead calm, you see a sudden and unaccountable motion begin to stir the dust which coats the road. Whirling round and round within a space of one or two feet, it rises at length into the form of a round pillar. I have seen it as high as two or three feet. This column may be observed to have two

distinct motions—first, its materials whirl in a circle round its axis with greater or less velocity; and secondly, the column itself moves at the same time along the road at a greater or less speed—continuing to whirl round, and also to advance, till the cause which produced it ceasing to act, it drops its burden and gradually disappears. This is a petty whirlwind. When these whirlwinds are formed on a large scale, they exert an enormous power of drawing up whatever comes within their reach, as was illustrated by one which occurred in the neighbourhood of my old sea-coast parish. First descried out at sea as a vast column of water advancing to the shore, it struck the land near a fishing village, and where a number of boats lay high and dry on the beach. Some were herring-boats, of seven or ten tons burden; and these it turned over, while it not only whirled the smaller craft off the ground, but lifted them so high into the air that they were shattered in their fall. Now this double motion, namely, one of the body of air around an axis, and the other of progress over the surface, seen so well in the familiar phenomenon to which I have referred, characterises all gales or great storms. The *tornadoes*, as they are called, which, entering an American forest, and doing more work in an hour than ten hundred thousand axes, level trees in long gaps of yards or miles in breadth, and also the *typhoons*, so fatal to ships in the Chinese seas, have long been known to be winds which have both a revolving and progressive motion. And now, by a series of extended and continuous observations, it has been proved that all our great storms are of the same cha-

racter ; only, instead of a diameter of a few yards or miles, they go round in their gyrations on a circle of one, or of several, hundred miles in diameter.

The power of the gale does not lie in that progressive motion by which it advances from place to place. Much the same in the weakest as in the greatest storms, this has no destructive power. For example, the centre of the late great storm (December, 1863), according to M. Marie Davy, who is entrusted with the meteorological department at the Observatory at Paris, travelled at no greater rate than that of ten leagues an hour. This progressive motion of a storm is not only comparatively slow, but, owing to causes which we have not yet discovered and never may discover, it appears capricious—as I have seen illustrated by the column of dust already referred to, which, after advancing straight forward on one side of the road, would, without any apparent reason, cross to the other ; and then, as if it had taken another thought, commence a retrograde movement. For example, according to M. Marie Davy, the late storm, which was born in lower latitudes, reached Ireland on the 1st of December ; its centre being about sixty leagues from the north-west coast of that island. On the morning of the 2nd its centre was in the neighbourhood of Shrewsbury, while at one o'clock of that day it was raging furiously at Paris. Driven back to the north, its centre on the 3rd was in the neighbourhood of York. Thereafter, resuming its natural course, it moved eastward, and, smiting Copenhagen on the 4th and on the 5th, left the Baltic between Libau and Königsberg on its way to

Russia. In this progressive motion we have the key to the prophetic-like power by which Admiral Fitzroy, sitting in London, warns the fishers of Nairn on the one hand, or the sailors of Rochelle on the other, to look out for a gale ; and in its capriciousness we have, perhaps, one explanation of the occasional failure of the Admiral's predictions. The science is yet in its infancy ; but the future is full of hope. "By certain tests," to quote the Admiral's own words, "one is able to tell, within a sweep of 500 miles from London, what changes or movements are impending in the air. Certainty is not yet attainable, but a fair average probability for a certain area is already within our reach. It is by a continuous observation of the changes, and indications of changes, that we are now enabled to decide and direct with confidence." The old saying may ever in a certain sense hold true that "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth ;" yet, though we should never advance another step, we have the satisfaction of knowing that Admiral Fitzroy and others have made discoveries, which will continue to save from the devouring ocean millions' worth of valuable property, and thousands of precious lives.

The real force of the wind in a gale lies in the circular motion of the body of air ; and by *anemometers*, we are able to accurately determine the amount of this—the power, or, what is the same thing, the rapidity of the wind. These instruments were once constructed on the principle that the cooling power of a current of air depends on its velocity—as is practically illustrated by

boys who blow on their porridge to cool it; others were constructed on the equally well-known principle that the evaporation of water is proportionable to the velocity of the wind—a fact familiar to washerwomen who find clothes dry much faster in a breezy than in a quiet day. These, and many others besides, have given place to instruments which, by wind-mill flies, or a system of rotating hemispherical cups, set in motion a series of wheels that indicate, and, being self-registering, also record both the direction and velocity of the wind.

The following table shows the pressure which different winds will exert upon a square foot of surface exposed directly against them; and as it also describes the character of the winds, the reader will be able to form a rough guess both of the power and of the rate of any wind that may be going:—

Velocity of Wind. Miles per Hour.	Force on One Square Foot.	Character of Wind.
1	.005	Hardly perceptible.
4	.079	Gentle, pleasant, wind.
15	1.107	Pleasant, but brisk.
25	2.	Very brisk.
36	5.	High winds.
45	9. }	Very high.
50	10. }	
62	15.	Great storm.
80	26. }	Hurricane.
95	37. }	
101	41. }	Destructive hurricane.
108	46. }	

This table shows that a hurricane travels at the rate of

eighty or ninety miles an hour—about the speed of an eagle at her full flight, and exerts a pressure of thirty pounds on the square foot; and that a destructive hurricane exerts a pressure of forty or fifty pounds on the square foot, rushing through the air at double the highest rate of an express train.

The gale of the 3rd of December was a destructive hurricane. It would appear, from observations made at Liverpool, that its utmost severity fell on that town and its neighbourhood; for according to the anemometers in the Observatory there, its pressure between eight and ten o'clock of the forenoon of the 3rd of December was equal to forty-three pounds on the square foot; and this is the highest ever registered at that observatory, and considerably higher than the registers of this gale at London, or any other place. Interesting as the above table is, it will convey to many a very imperfect idea of the power of the wind to raise storms, before which the stoutest ships of oak or iron may be crushed, like an egg shell. One or two facts which have come under my own eye, may convey to most readers a more distinct and vivid idea of the power of the sea in such a gale.

The manse of my country parish commanded a view of the Bell Rock Lighthouse, which stands boldly out in the sea twelve miles from the coast of Forfarshire, and, protected by no headland, is exposed to all the fury of the German Ocean. It rises from a reef, laid bare at low water, to the height of 100 feet; yet I have seen the wave which rushed and struck against it, mount to its very summit; and, wrapping the tower in a sheet of

snowy foam, make it suddenly appear through the gloom of the tempest, like a spectre ; it is said that occasionally the waves are hurled against it with such enormous power, that they rush up one side, a sheet of unbroken water, to pour over its top, like a cascade on the other. Some years ago I went to see the lighthouse which, standing on Dunnet Head, the Cape Orcas of the Romans, guards the mouth of the Pentland Firth, and marks the western opening of that tempestuous channel. The cliff from which it rises is more than 200 feet high, and the tower itself, which stands on its brink, is at least seventy. It is lighted by means of Fresnel's dioptric apparatus—a beautiful invention, whereby, through a series of prisms, all the rays of light which do not fall in the first instance on the reflector are caught, thrown back on it, and then shot away, right out, on the Atlantic. Thus, by gathering up the fragments that nothing may be lost, as well as from the height of the cliff on which it shines, this light is visible at a distance of not less than twenty-three nautical miles—a distance exceeded by no lighthouse on the coast of Scotland, save those off Barra Head and Cape Wrath. Well, on ascending the tower to examine the Frenchman's beautiful and ingenious device, I observed the thick plate-glass windows of the lantern cracked, starred in a number of places. It could not be there, as in our towns, when some wretched drunkard, reeling along the pavement, lurches against a plate-glass shop window. Wild geese and other birds in their migrations, during the darkness, were, I knew, often attracted by such lights, and striking against the

glass of the lanthorns, occasionally broke it; but, not seeing how any bird could crack so thick a plate, I turned to the keeper for an explanation. It appears that it is done by stones flung up by the sea. The wave, on being thrown forward against the cliff, strikes it with such tremendous force as to hurl the loose stones at its base right up to the height of 300 feet. A very remarkable circumstance; and one from which the reader may form some conception of the power of the sea in such a gale as that of the 3rd December.

Another proof of this is occasionally seen in great grandeur on the neighbouring and equally stormy coasts. Hoy Head, in Orkney, is one of the noblest sea cliffs, if not the noblest, in her Majesty's dominions, or almost anywhere else. In front of it, some thirty or fifty feet from its base, stands the remarkable rock called the Old Man of Hoy; its form rises out of the sea, to the height of 300 feet, singularly like that of an old man wrapt in a cloak, and looking meditatively out on the Atlantic ocean. But the headland in front of which he stands, as James Wilson said, with his feet always cold, is, in that part called the Brow of the Brae, one sheer, unbroken crag of 1150 feet. I can believe this; for I remember, when sailing along in front of and close by it, how the sea fowl at its summit looked more like swallows than great long-winged gulls. Now, the Orcadians told me that in a hurricane, they have seen an Atlantic wave strike this headland in such volume, and with such power, that it has rushed half way up the cliff, throwing itself, in its great but impotent rage, to the height of

nearly 600 feet. Hurlled by such a sea against such a crag, a man-of-war, though built of the strongest oak and bound with the toughest iron, would be shattered, like a ship of glass.

Perhaps, the graphic terms of some of the seamen examined by the court which sat on the loss of the "Royal Charter," will convey a more vivid idea of the power of the sea in a gale than even facts could do. After a long voyage round half the globe, four hundred and eighty souls perished in that dreadful wreck, within sight of home. Yet though the gale on that occasion did not, according to anemometers, at Liverpool exert a pressure equal to that of the 3rd of December, such were the power and fury of the sea, that it seized masses of rock of fourteen tons weight, and, tearing them up, bowled them along the sands to hurl them on the shores of Anglesea. The "Royal Charter" was one of the most powerful auxiliary steamships of her day. She registered nearly 3000 tons burden; and was built of the best metal our hammers could forge, all bound together in one rigid mass by the strongest rivets. Yet when she met her fate, an engineer, in describing the catastrophe, says that, "on taking the rocks, such a sea struck her on two angles, that it broke her back, *just as I would a stick across my knee;*" or, as one of the few survivors said, speaking of this vast, firmly bound mass of iron, the sea broke her as *one would smash a pipe stump*. All this only leaves us to wonder, and bless Him who holds the winds in his fist and the lives of seamen in his hand, that the gale which I am now to describe, as seen and

felt at New Brighton, did not work more havoc on an element of which the poet truly and touchingly sings—

“Thou canst not name one tender tie
But there dissolved its relics lie.”

I may begin with the copy of a letter which I wrote to Edinburgh, on the afternoon of Thursday, the 3rd of December:—“. . . On Tuesday, the 1st, Admiral Fitzroy, who would have made a fortune two hundred years ago by selling winds to seamen, if he was fortunate enough to escape being drowned or burned as a warlock, had sent notice to all the seaports that on Wednesday and Thursday the wind would blow from the west, strong to a gale. Well, yesterday morning his prediction seemed as worthless as those of Moore's Almanack, where we used to have the wind and weather given from the January of the one year to the January of the next. The sky was hazy; the air a dead calm; and the sea smooth as a mill-pond. But, as we took our forenoon saunter on the sands, the curtain which hid Waterloo, a suburb of Liverpool which stands facing us on the opposite shore, suddenly lifted; and though two or three miles of water lie between us and its houses, they stood out as distinctly as if they were not a third of the distance away. A pretty sure sign of a change, this was the pause before the battle, the gleam before the storm.

“A short while, and the sky began to darken and the wind to rise; and in less than an hour the heavens and earth were in wild commotion. The tempest roared;

the sea foamed with rage ; and the sand on its shore was blown, as I never saw sand blown before—scudding along like a low mist, to form, wherever it encountered house or wall, great heaps, like wreaths of snow, only they were grey in place of white, and drifting landward in clouds, as if its purpose was to bury the town. So it continued all day long. We made some attempts to go out, but were glad to beat a retreat ; for the wind was absolutely choking, the sand filled our nostrils, ears, and mouth, and, so far as the eyes were concerned, it was what the Scotch call a *blind drift*. As the night fell down, so did the storm,—it seemed to have worn itself out, and gone to sleep with the rest of the world. But, as if its exhausted energies had been restored by a night's repose, the gale returned **with** double fury on Thursday morning.

“ No boat could leave our landing-stage for Liverpool, so that —— was ‘storm-stay’d,’ and had to spend the day with us, instead of in his office. Some gentlemen, anxious to get to their places of business, set off in a van for Birkenhead, intending to cross from thence to Liverpool, as almost no weather stops the ferry-boats so far up the river. It was a bold, but unsuccessful attempt. The hurricane capsized the van, and emptied its freight on the road—a disaster which also befell the milk-cart, to the detriment of our breakfast. You remember the storms we sometimes had at Lochlee ; and how, roaring down into the glen from the peak of Cragmaskeldie, they blew the water in great sheets out of the river, and, falling in **whirlwinds** on the loch, whisked up clouds of spray as

high as the neighbouring hills. Yet the storm to-day beat any we ever saw there. Blowing through every chink of doors and windows, it has coated chairs, tables, carpets, the whole interior of the house, with sand. And how it sounds!—whistling, howling, shrieking, yelling; and in our bed-room, where it has found out some curiously constructed crevice, humming with a noise like the thousand spindles of a mill, or such as you could fancy coming from the drone of a Highland bagpipe, as big as the pipes of a church organ.

“The town, from which our servant who ventured out has just returned, looks like a deserted city—no shop open, and nobody in the streets. Such was the strength of the gale, that it took me, the two lads, and a servant, to shut our front door. The servant had incautiously opened it, and was at once laid on her back in the lobby.

“The sea is in an awful turmoil; thundering on the shore; and ever and anon some great wave hurls itself against the fort, making grand explosions, if I may say so; throwing the most beautiful clouds of spray high in the air above the cannon which crown the massive walls. The gale has blown such a mass of water inshore, that had this been a time of spring, instead of neap tides, the ground story of our house would probably have been afloat; and with sand in the upper story, without the sea in the lower, we have discomforts enough. But these have been little thought of. We have been thinking of the poor fellows who are fighting for life out on the stormy deep; and have also been rejoicing with them

that do rejoice—with some whom we have seen come safe out of the battle. Sand, wind, rain, everything was forgotten, as another and another barque hove in sight, and we turned our glasses to see her as she came rolling, pitching, ploughing through the mist and foam to take the Mersey, and feel herself safe on passing the fort and lighthouse.

“Not more in all than three or four have ventured in ; and these perhaps, because the gale caught them so near shore that they could not beat out to sea. The sight of these vessels returning shattered, but safe, from a deadly conflict with the elements, carried me back nearly half a century to the day when the whole of Edinburgh crushed into the High Street and Canongate to welcome the survivors of the 42nd Highlanders on their return from Waterloo. The spectators filled every window of the seven and eight-storied houses, crowded every roof, and clustered, like swarms of bees, on the chimney tops ; and it was a stirring sight to see that small band of gallant men marching up to the Castle, some with their arms in slings, patches still on the naked limbs that trode and on the brave bronzed faces that looked upon that bloody field, and, waving over their heads, amid cheers that rent the air and seemed to shake out their folds, the torn colours which they had borne into the fight, and brought out of it with Highland honour. I had seen that grand sight when I was a boy ; and it was recalled to my recollection as vessel after vessel came in, each bearing plain evidence of the struggle she had had for life. Save one low sail to steer by and keep them off shore, they did

not show a bit of canvas, nor could they. All had been blown from the bolts, or torn to rags ; and their remnants were flying from the yards like ribbons—shreds of flesh on a skeleton, or, as in the case of some of their jibs, dragging from the bowsprit through the sea. As each went past, now showing her keel as she lurched over the top of a wave, and then, as she went down into the trough of the sea, burying her hull and showing only naked masts—the waves now flying in clouds of spray among her yards, and now leaping bodily on her deck to sweep it fore and aft—we watched the scene with the deepest interest ; we mentally congratulated the poor fellows ; we thanked God that they were safe ; and we would have sent forth a cheer had there been any chance of its reaching them,—but human voices were lost amid the crash of the waves and the everlasting roar of the hurricane. . . .” So ran the letter.

On the morning of the day after the gale, which had entirely gone down during the night, we turned our glasses on the shores and sand-banks. Three vessels lay stranded on the opposite beach ; a fourth was fast on a bank on our side of the channel, the waves breaking furiously over her hull ; and further out the masts of a fifth, which had gone down in deep water, were sticking up like bare poles. But our attention was soon drawn to a sight which recalled the old, barbarous days when, by lighting fires on the shore, men, regardless of the lives of the crews, lured vessels to their destruction ; or rather to still later times when, though no attempts were made to wreck vessels, little scruple was felt about plun-

dering such as happened to come ashore. I knew the son of a minister of Lunan, in my native county and old presbytery, of whom they tell that when he was preaching one Sabbath, he saw one and another of his parishioners rise and leave the church. On looking out at a window, nigh the pulpit, to see what had happened outside to cause this inside commotion, he descried a vessel ashore in the bay. He knew that his worthy people held all that the sea gave them as a special gift from God ; and that, regardless of the rights of owners, or perhaps even of the lives of sailors, they would throw themselves on the wreck like wolves on a carcase—every man for himself. As eccentric as he was humane and honest, it occurred to him that the only way to stop the plunder, and perhaps save the perishing, was to appear to make himself one of the party—as bad as the others. So, hastily closing the Bible, he left the pulpit, and, as he hurried down the stairs, shouted to the crowd who were making for the door, “Halt, halt, sirs !—let’s a’ start fair !”

Now, here in the grey of the morning, we first saw four or five people moving along shore, and by and by returning with burdens on their shoulders. In a little while, as do crows when some one or two of the black fraternity have discovered a store of worms, the numbers rapidly increased ; at length carts, some drawn by donkeys and others by horses, appeared on the scene. We could not fancy what this stir was about ; but on going out, got it explained. During the night more than one vessel had gone to pieces not far from our doors. Right

before our house lay a pile of articles on the sand, the vestiges of a wreck—part of a ship's stern, a lot of shattered planks, a short ladder, a pail, some handspikes, and, among many smaller articles, a rude, wooden spectacle-case ; which last was all I appropriated of the wreck. He who had been its owner had found a watery grave ; and it was of no value to any one—nor to me, but as a souvenir of the gale. On going along the beach, we found it strewed with ribs of ships, broken masts, yards, oars, the chaff of beds, pillow-cases, and various articles of ship furniture. As if women as well as men had perished, I saw a petticoat floating about among other wreck amid the waves. But what pained one most to see, was something lying on the sand, which suggested a terrible, but vain struggle for life—the step of a mast with a rope tied to it, the lower end of which had been made into a loop, sustained by which some poor fellow had hoped to float ashore. It had come ashore, not he, —his fate only less painful, because his agony was less prolonged, than his whose dead body was found, some days after the gale, wandering about in the sea, buoyed up by a life-preserver.

A welcome relief from the melancholy fancies of death and drowning struggles these sights produced, we had the satisfaction of looking at a ship's crew who had escaped the jaws of destruction but some hours before. Their schooner had gone on the banks some half-mile off land, in the dead of night. We confess to sympathising with their small, wiry, grey terrier, which, with canine sagacity, had also taken to the boat, and was

now wheeling round us, ploughing the sand with his nose, barking and frisking about as if he felt life all the sweeter for having been so nearly lost. The sad matter was that they were not all there ; one was in the bottom of the sea—a fine young fellow, whom they left alone on the ship's deck, with not an hour to live. When she struck and began to break up, they all took to their boat, hoping to make the shore ; but the boat was still attached to the ship by the painter, as the rope is called. This should have been cut. In the confusion the lad who was lost leapt once more aboard to loosen it ; and before he could return, an immense wave, seizing the boat, swept it away, and left him standing alone on the deck. The shore and life were on this side, and that poor perishing man on the other ; yet they would have run the risk of returning for him, but could not. The wave which swept them away, besides filling their boat almost to the gunwale, and almost swamping her, carried off one of their two oars. They could do nothing. So, while they were drifted to the beach, he was left to die alone ; and we were left to hope that God was with him in that terrible hour, and that the wave which swept him into eternity found him on his knees, and with his last breath washed a prayer for mercy from his lips.

Near by the scene of this catastrophe, and but a little way off shore, there floated, like a great black coffin, the hull of another schooner, bottom up. None knew where, or how her crew had perished. But they were all drowned, six in number ; and, with them, three Liverpool pilots, who, after conducting other ships safely out

to sea, went on board of her with the intention of returning to their port. With all these hands to work, and with the best of skill to guide her, down she went; for it is on the sea as on the land,—“the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.” A sore battle indeed it had been, as many vessels showed, which, by help of a bit of a sail, or drawn by tugs, passed us that day and the next on their way to Liverpool. Some with bulwarks stove in or torn off flush with the deck; some with yards blown away, or the sails hanging from them like ribbons; some with the stump of a mast standing like a tree snapped by the middle, or every mast cut clean away by the board—they came, entering the river as the best of men, when life’s storms are over, shall enter Heaven, “scarcely saved.”

The ravages of this gale were felt all along our coasts. It was said that from eighteen to twenty-seven vessels had foundered in the harbour at Holyhead, and that as many as sixty-eight bodies had been washed ashore there. This was an exaggeration; but there is no doubt that hundreds of vessels were wrecked in this gale, and that the loss of life was terrible. For example, more than 100 men and boys have perished belonging to one seaport—Yarmouth; and hundreds more would have perished but for the brave and almost superhuman exertions of our lifeboat crews. What these gallant men dare, and do, may be illustrated by the following story. Towed out by a tug, the lifeboat slipt her cable, and bore down amid the darkness of the night and through a terrific sea, on a large stranded ship—steering for the tar barrels

which she was burning on her deck as a signal of distress. With all his faults, the sailor is as kind and gallant as he is brave; and so after they had got alongside of her with the greatest difficulty, they shouted to those on board to first save the women and children. The scene at the same time was appalling—the howling of the wind, mingled with the shrieks of the women and the rush of the waves against the sides of the ship, accustomed as the boat's crew were to such sights, made them doubly anxious. At the first trip, they took off twenty-five women and children, carrying them to the tug. Again she helped them into a position to run down on the ship, and back and forward went these brave men through that roaring sea, till they had rescued every passenger at the imminent peril of their own lives. They had hardly begun to think of the repose they needed so much, and had earned so well, when a new call was made on their energies. Another large vessel was stranded. She lay on her beam ends, with her crew exhausted and the sea making a clean breach over them. Responding to the call of duty and humanity, these noble fellows went again to the work. The danger was greater than ever, but they faced it; and before that lifeboat crew rested on their oars, they landed in all about 120 souls. Talk of courage! where is it to be found nobler; or in a nobler cause? We would hope that the services bravely rendered to humanity by lifeboat crews in the late gale, will secure a larger measure of support to Lifeboat Institutions than they have hitherto received. They have not been supported up either to their necessities or

merits ; nor have the services of our seamen, whether belonging, or not belonging, to lifeboats, who have put their lives in peril to save others, met the acknowledgments which they deserved—and which in France they know so well how to bestow. At Cherbourg, for instance, a lieutenant and thirty-two men of a French frigate put off to save a merchantman foundering in the roads during the late gale. Their launch was upset, and they were all drowned—self-sacrificed in the cause of humanity. On this melancholy occasion the Admiral addressed an order of the day to the officers and crews of the fleet ; while the Emperor, to honour the memory of these devoted men, ordered their funeral to be performed with august ceremonies. Business was suspended in the town ; the entire population joined in the procession ; all the troops and seamen in the port were under arms ; the ships of war carried their flags half-mast high ; and cannon boomed at intervals to the memory of the brave. We would not grudge our neighbours the honour of such a worthy act and well-earned expression of respect, if we saw our Lifeboat Institutions more liberally supported, and more adequate rewards and honours bestowed on those who might often make hundreds of pounds by salvage, if they did not prefer the lives of drowning men to their own pecuniary advantage.

This gale brings out the perils and hardships to which our seamen are exposed ; and who can think of these, without feeling ashamed that so little is done by the nation, on behalf of men whose life is one danger, on whose bravery our country has often depended for her

safety, and on whose labours she depends for so much of her enormous and ever-growing wealth. Early removed from home and all its blessed influences; exposed to temptations greater even than the dangers of the deep; far from the kind and guardian care of parents, sisters and brothers; enjoying no quiet Sabbaths, and strangers to the sound of the church-going bell; no sooner on shore, with exuberant spirits and purses full of money, than they are assailed by crimps, landsharks, harpies, who make them their prey, nor leave them till they are plundered of all their hard-earned wages—they should be the objects of our kind and Christian care. It is a scandal and a deep stigma on the wealth, humanity, and Christianity of our seaport towns, that so little is done for our seamen—to bless them for this world and save them for the next.

As a class, those who have had to do with seamen say that they are kind, impressible, generous, tender-hearted, and very open to good influences. We have certainly met with some of the finest, noblest specimens of religion among them; and the most careless have often been found with such a respect for it, and sense of it, as gives us something to work on. We are shocked to hear them spoken of as a class doomed by the terrible necessity of their circumstances to wasteful habits and a wicked life. Nor will this paper have been written in vain if it move the sympathy of my readers for seamen, and awaken or increase an interest in schemes now afloat to further their temporal and spiritual welfare.

THE STREETS OF PARIS.

I.



COMPANY of men of different tastes and pursuits, bowling along the same road on the top of a stage-coach, view the country they pass through under widely different aspects. The gentleman with the erect air and military cap finds out that that old ivy-mantled fortress, nodding to its fall on the top of the crag, could be commanded from the neighbouring hill ; and that the mountain pass through which the river foams, leaving scant room for the road between it and the cliffs, is the key of the glen into which it opens. His neighbour in tops, with his vast form wrapped in a heavy great coat, and the folds of a shawl rolled by a careful housewife round his ample throat, notes little else than fences to be repaired, or marshy places to be drained, the character of the stock, the progress of the crops, the size and condition of the farms. Of a peaceful profession, and knowing nothing of Shorthorns, or any roots save those of the Hebrew tongue, the sedate gentleman with his nether limbs in priest grey is careful to reckon the

number of steeples which rise, as they do in many parts of England, from a wide sea of foliage; and now and then perhaps he casts a covetous eye on a parsonage, snugly nestling in quiet beauty, amid roses and woodbine, beside a picturesque church and its old grey tower. His neighbour, a brisk and business-like man, blind to steeples, sees only the tall chimneys that, vomiting forth clouds of smoke (but turning thousands of spindles), enrich the country while they deform the landscape; nor does he pass a free and happy stream, leaping the cascade and rushing over the rocks to wind through the valley like a silver snake, without lamenting its uselessness—his the utilitarian soul of the Yankee who, on beholding Niagara for the first time, was lost, not in speechless wonder, but in calculating by the Rule of Three how much machinery the cataract would turn. Despising his utilitarian neighbour, and hating all straight-water cuts, whether for agricultural or manufacturing purposes, more because they destroy good fishing than the picturesque and winding form,—Hogarth's line of beauty, which rivers left to themselves always assume,—the last of the group, as the coach runs along the banks of a lovely stream, marks its fine runs, and the long deep stretches where salmon are lying ready to carry out thirty yards of line at a burst, and after that trial of strength and skill which men, not the fish, call playing, turn up their silver sides to the gaff or the hands that jerk them ashore.

Different objects strike different people. Of this I had once a remarkable proof in the exclamation of a worthy woman whom I had conducted to a picturesque

scene, benevolently hoping that it would afford her as much gratification as it always had done me.

Above, the mountain raised a bald and rugged head into the blue sky ; while, save where bold crags showed their grey sides amid the green foliage, shaggy woods swept down to the river, which, rushing along with music in its sound, or whirling in deep, black, silent pools, washed its base. Guiding her through a dark pine forest to the point of a rock where the opening scene burst at once on our view, I bade her look ! She did ; and gave vent to her feelings in an expression of admiration—not, however, of the picturesqueness of the scene. An industrious and careful manager of household affairs, the one object which fixed her eye was a bit of green-sward, enamelled with daisies, that lay by the bank of the stream at the bottom of the gorge ; nor had my zeal for the picturesque other reward than to hear the honest soul exclaim, “A bonnie washing green ; what a bonnie washing green !”

Chacun à son gout—every one, as the French say, to his own taste. Behold my apology for dwelling chiefly in this, and future papers, on the social aspects of Paris and of France. With all respect for the fine arts, I will have little, or nothing, to say on paintings, sculpture, architecture, and the like ; nor will my observations bear any resemblance to the journal of a young gentleman who posts his readers up on operas and theatres, and is particular in telling where, to use his own expressions, he had a *capital dinner*, or a *jolly wash*. In attempting to communicate that which, having the charms of novelty

to myself, may be entertaining as well as instructive to others, the readers whom I have in my eye are not such as frequent visits to the Continent have made familiar with France, its people, and customs, and manners. Thousands of those who read "Good Words" have never crossed the Channel; and, though not believing with our forefathers that the French live on frogs, and that therefore, fed on substantial roast beef or good oatmeal, one Englishman or Scotchman can beat a dozen French, they may learn something of our neighbours which is both new and true. To these chiefly I address myself. They will find my observations, though perhaps as rambling as my movements, are not those of one who can see no good thing in France, **nor good** qualities to admire in French men or women.

To plunge *in medias res*, I begin at once with Paris. It has changed more than any other city of the world since I first knew it in 1826, when Charles X. occupied a throne which has not seen a sovereign die on it for nearly a hundred years—through such whirls of revolution has France passed. At that time things were in a very primitive state. A gutter, or open sewer, occupied the middle of many of the streets. These, which were very narrow, as well as dark by reason of the loftiness of the houses, had no *trottoirs* or pavement; so that it often happened that one's only protection, when two carriages passed each other, was to bolt into a shop, or draw up in the nearest door-way. These streets were lighted by lamps which hung over the gutter and were suspended from a cord that passed over the thoroughfare from one

house to its opposite ; and hence I may remark an expression common in the days of the Revolution, when, on catching some unfortunate priest or royalist, whom they had hunted from his hiding-place or happened to meet, the mob cried, "*À la lanterne!*"—To the lamp with him! The arrangement for hanging the lamp supplied quite a ready means of hanging their victim, without their having to break into a shop for a rope. Though not fit in point of natural beauty to hold, if I may use such an expression, the candle to Edinburgh, Paris, under the hand of Napoleon, will soon boast, or may already boast, of being in respect of architectural beauty the Queen of Cities. Improvements are opening up its densest quarters to the breath of heaven and the light of day. In many instances their place is occupied by Boulevards, which, rising as it were by magic, form streets wide enough to allow thirty carriages to run abreast, and have their ample pavements bordered by lines of chestnuts, or other ornamental trees, to delight the eye with their green, and afford a pleasant shade under their spreading foliage.

The spider makes its house out of its own bowels ; so, in a sense does Paris—where they raise, from underground quarries, the materials of which the streets are built. Here no skin peels off, as in London, to betray a cheat, and show that this fine groining, and these Corinthian pillars are but a sort of Brummagem ware in stone ; plaster ornaments covering an ugly brick wall. Nor here, as in Edinburgh, is veritable and beautiful stonework begrimed in a few years by coal-smoke, spewed out from

the foul throats of a thousand chimneys; and on a frosty morning spreading over the city such a murky pall as to have given to what Tennyson calls "the grey metropolis of the North" the less respectable name of "Auld Reekie,"—to say nothing, *en passant*, of that hideous gas-work stalk which neither Louis Napoleon nor the municipality of Paris would have allowed to rise up to poison the air and deform the beauty of their town. The material of which Paris is built is a white stone; and the beauty of the material is even surpassed by the manner in which it is wrought. With hotels, spacious and splendid within as royal palaces, it boasts of streets that look quite palatial, and where one reads with wonder the signs of tailors, dressmakers, upholsterers, and such tradespeople on buildings to which the London houses of our noblemen are, with some exceptions, not to be compared. So that, if Louis Napoleon live long (which, for reasons to be given, I pray he may), the French Emperor may say of Paris what the Roman said of Rome: "I found it brick and left it marble."

The pleasure which one enjoys in a promenade along these elegant, spacious, and brilliant streets, is not without its drawbacks. To a reflective mind, it is dashed somewhat by thinking of the hardships and sufferings which changes, certainly beautiful, and on the whole beneficial, have meanwhile imposed on the working-classes. Many large and densely-peopled quarters which they inhabited having been pulled down, the "ouvriers" find it difficult to obtain suitable accommodation for themselves and families; and in consequence of

that, they are crowded together in such numbers in those that still stand, as cannot fail to be detrimental both to their health and morals. Much nonsense, no doubt, is talked and written about the diseases and deaths caused by overcrowding. Some statisticians, for example, take a respectable district of a town, and find a certain percentage of death occurring there: then, they take another, but disreputable district, with the same number of inhabitants, and find that it has, say, double the number of deaths; and, ascertaining that the inhabitants in the latter are crowded into half the space occupied by those in the other quarter, they leap at once to the conclusion, that the main, if not sole, cause of the terrible mortality in the disreputable district lies in overcrowding and the want of a sufficient supply of pure air. We sleep with our bedroom window open, summer and winter—following at a respectful distance the practice of a celebrated physician whom we remember in our boyhood at college as “ultimus Romanorum”—the last living man of his generation who walked the streets with ruffles, buckles, and cocked hat. His practice, it was said, was to sleep in a bed, not only innocent of curtains, but placed right in the draught of two open and opposite windows. Without holding such extreme views, we admit the importance of a supply of pure air; and yet believe that the gentlemen referred to, by overlooking other elements of disease and death besides overcrowding, offer illustrations of the famous saying, that “There is nothing so false as figures, but facts.” Transfer the people among whom there is such a dreadful mortality to the lofty and spacious

chambers of a palace, and unless you change their habits with their houses, the bills of mortality will show little improvement. It is drunkenness with its train of attendant evils, insufficient nourishment, inadequate clothing, cold, hunger, cruel usage, and broken hearts—want and misery in a hundred forms, to which the high mortality of these districts is chiefly owing. Knowing what we say and whereof we affirm, we say that if foul air kills its thousands, drunkenness kills its tens of thousands; and that therefore the statistics of the mortality in such districts, by attributing the deadly results chiefly, if not entirely, to overcrowding, are fallacious. Worse still, they turn attention away from that vice which, to say nothing of precious souls, costs our country, year by year, millions of money and thousands of lives.

The Paris clearances, like some in the over-peopled districts of Ireland and the Highlands, have no doubt been too sudden and sweeping; yet in the end the working classes, being forced to extend themselves over a larger surface, will benefit by the change. The fire which, two centuries ago, laid whole streets of London in ashes, became in the course of time a permanent benefit to the city; and even meanwhile, the “ouvriers” find one thing set against another, and suffer less from these changes than some other classes of society. Masons, carpenters, plasterers, plumbers, and others connected with their trades, have been kept in constant employment; and receiving high wages, with abundance of work, they have suffered less than many who have

drawn no direct benefit from these alterations, and yet, in consequence of the scarcity of house accommodation, have had house rents raised on them to an enormous amount. We resided, for instance, in a "pension," or boarding-house, which consisted of three public rooms, a kitchen, and some eighteen bedrooms, most of them very small. Though situated in a central part of the town, it stood in a plain court, off a very common street; yet for this tenement the master of our "pension" paid 500*l.* sterling; nor did this large sum include a load of taxes, raised in proportion to the rent, and payable to the government and municipal authorities. The people of Paris grow restive under their burdens. They are finding out that the magnificent and costly improvements which the government plans and the municipality executes they have in the end to pay for. Shopkeepers, and those who have hotels and pensions, complain that the English are scared from Paris by the excessively high rates to which everything has risen; and that, finding railways open a way southward, they have carried themselves and their money elsewhere.

In connection with these improvements of Paris, a more serious than any pecuniary evil lies before France—like a rock ahead. The government meanwhile keep the workmen of Temple and St. Antoine quiet and peaceful. They get high wages and constant employment, and so are tranquil—no proverb more true than this, "It is a hungry man that is an angry one." Working men, when they have plenty to eat and drink, have no appetite for revolutions. But in France, and elsewhere, thoughtful

men are looking forward to a time, perhaps not very distant, when the funds required for carrying out these improvements shall be exhausted ; or rather, when the debt they entail becomes insupportable. They are asking themselves, What then ? Temple and St. Antoine must have bread. "Bread or blood !" is no new cry in Paris ; and, clever as the nephew is, Louis Napoleon has small chance of such success as attended his great uncle when he scattered a formidable mob, not by his bayonets, but by his wit. Then an officer of the Government of the Revolution, the first Napoleon had been ordered out to disperse a body of rioters. Having drawn up his soldiers and some guns across the street, he waited their advance. They at length appeared, sweeping down on him and his party like a roaring torrent. The artillerymen, with their port-fires, stood ready at his signal to pour showers of grape into the body of the mob. Unwilling to shed blood, he stepped out from his men to reason with the suffering and misguided people, and soon found himself *vis-à-vis* with their head—a virago of a woman, whose appearance presented a remarkable contrast to his own. She was of great size, and enormously fat ; while he, always very little, was at that time so thin, as well as small, that he was known by the *sobriquet* of "Le Petit Caporal." He remonstrated with this lady ; but she replied with volleys of abuse—telling him that while she and other honest, hard-working people were starving, such idle fellows as he and his soldiers were fattening on the best of the land. With that eagle eye and remarkable promptitude which afterwards turned the

fate of many a battle-field, Napoleon saw at once the weak point of his adversary's position. He paused till she was out of breath. Then taking off his hat, he bowed to the mob ; and, placing his own thin figure beside that of his fat opponent, he asked them to say, whether the good lady or he looked most like starving ? As happens in more respectable assemblies than mobs, and elsewhere than in witty France, a good-humoured joke won the day ; and the people, for the time at least, quietly dispersed. A piece of rare good fortune, such as the chapter of accidents seldom turns up !

Napoleon III. is said to trust to other means than this of keeping down a people who, little restrained by moral or religious principles, are the immediate descendants of such as were familiar with revolutions—with building barricades and overturning thrones. We dread a time of suffering overtaking the “ouvrier” of Paris. It will certainly not be met with the calm, and noble, and in so many instances Christian, patience of our Lancashire cotton-weavers. The spirit of revolution in France is not dead, but sleepeth ; and what there are spirits in Paris prepared to dare and do, flashed out in the terrible reply of one of them. Being told that, ill-furnished with arms, and exposed to cannonade and fusillade in the now spacious streets, their power of revolution was gone, he smiled grimly ; and alluding at once to the numbers of the working classes, and the terrible means which, if roused, they were prepared to adopt, said, “ *We have two hundred thousand lucifer matches !* ” After the horrors of the first revolution, unparalleled in history, it

were hard to say to what means the lower classes of Paris, led on by wicked men, would not resort—setting at nought all the precautions which the Emperor has taken to secure the peace of the capital and the preservation of his throne. He has taken every possible precaution; and indeed it is whispered that he had other ends in view in improving Paris, than merely the beauty and health of the city. Clearing out the dense parts, and widening the streets, he has laid it open to be easily swept, in the case of an *émeute*, by charges of cavalry and discharges of artillery; nor, it is said, has he removed the old paving stones from the streets to cover them with broken metal, so much to deaden the rumbling noise of carriages, as to prevent the mob finding in them the best materials for barricades—ramparts which, as in a street fight, put an undisciplined multitude on a par with regular troops. Deep as Napoleon is, these whisperings and suspicions give him credit for more depth than perhaps he could justly claim. We greatly fear that his wisest precautions would go for nothing, were a stagnation of work to throw the Parisian “ouvriers” out of bread. The ancient noblesse, as did the old adherents of the Stuart dynasty in our own country, dwell apart in their châteaux; and though they growl and grumble at the present order of things, they have little power to subvert it. But, unfortunately for the Emperor, the intellectual, and therefore influential, classes of Paris are not attached to his government; the shopkeepers, who care more for their profits than for either politics or religion, would, in case of a disturbance, close their doors

and quietly wait the result behind their shutters ; and although the Emperor could bring parks of artillery and pour regiments of soldiers into the streets, the French army might prove in his, what it has been in other hands, "a deceitful bow." Such are the lessons of experience. Closely connected with the people, and forced into the army through the system of conscription, the French soldier is not much to be depended on in any conflict between the government and the people.

But leaving these speculations, and the future of France to Him who "maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraineth the remainder of wrath," let us turn to some of those aspects of Paris which distinguish its streets more even than their architecture. In regard to some of these, it were well we imitated what we cannot but admire. Paris has other things besides her fashions which we would do well to copy ; and we might with advantage engraft on our free institutions a little of the vigour of her despotism.

1st.—The streets are remarkable for their cleanliness. A host of scavengers, who work through the night or at early day, present the fair city to its inhabitants every morning trim and in perfect order. I observed here, as in other towns of France, and in some of Switzerland, a practice which contributes much to their comfort and cleanliness. It is one which our municipal authorities at home might think of. From time to time water is turned into all the gutters, where it runs in a full stream, bearing off to underground sewers the straws, dust, or ashes that are swept into it. On looking out shortly after break of

day, I used to see men sweeping the court in which we dwelt with as much care as if it had been a house-floor; and it was both amusing and pleasant to see how the national politeness of a Frenchman would break out through his humble occupation—the sweeper stopping to lift his cap to a female acquaintance, not a whit higher in rank than himself, as she returned from the baker's carrying a piece of bread, like a paling stake, or went, with prayer-book or beads in hand, to early mass. This circumstance may be taken as an example of the respect which Frenchmen pay to woman, however humble—a fine feature of their national character. No Frenchman will either enter or leave a railway carriage where there are ladies without raising his hat; nor does he ever address, but with some mark of respect, the humblest domestic, or keeper of a stall or shop. In this country it is not rank only to which expressions of honour are paid. The high bear themselves politely even to the humble; and were that as much the rule at home as it is here, we should have less occasion to complain of the rudeness and coarse manners of our populace; for the world is a mirror which smiles on you if you meet it with smiles, and looks rudely on such as look rudely on it.

Nor, to return to the streets of Paris, are good order and cleanliness less apparent in the poorest than in the best streets of the city. Not that the former are or can be in such perfect order; yet in them we observed little corresponding to the foul condition of our city alleys, courts, or closes. It was a contrast, not a correspon-

dence. It humbled our national vanity ; and made us regret that free institutions, our popular election of town councillors and police commissioners, should result in less care being taken for the health and comfort and decent habits of the poor than under a despotic *régime*. By allowing such offices to be filled with inferior and inefficient men, or by niggardly grudging vigorous officials the funds, or, from petty jealousy, the powers necessary for making our towns decent and salubrious, we injure the cause of true liberty, and make it stink in the nostrils of mankind. It should not be so. Yet we could not shut our eyes to the fact that some things are managed better under a despotic than under a free government ; and that in fine parks for their health and recreation, in public exhibitions for their amusement and instruction, and in many municipal provisions for their comfort and cleanliness, the poor and working classes are better cared for here than at home.

Connected with this aspect of its streets, I observed that Paris had a class of men whose trade corresponds to one pursued at home—at least in Edinburgh.

Who walks by night or early morn the streets of our northern metropolis, may see, in wretched-looking girls or ragged old women, a hideous race who pass from one dust-heap to another to rake them with a knife and pick up such cinders, potatoes, bits of paper, or scraps of meat as lie among the ashes. From their dens of filth and darkness and drunkenness, which I have often visited, they issue forth, like hags of night, to find the means of prolonging a life of hunger, cold, ignorance, vice, and degradation.

Paris has a corresponding class ; but, though among the lowest and wildest of the people, they look wonderfully respectable. The *chiffonniers*, as they are called, are men. They are not clothed in rags—in Paris nobody is. In one hand they carry a lantern, and in the other a stick armed with a hook, which, as they pass from one dust-heap to another, they use with remarkable dexterity ; transfixing rags, paper, offal, anything that may be turned into money—as fast as a heron does a trout—to transport it with a jerk into the wicker basket on their back. In this, as in many things else besides their celebrated cookery, the French, who maugre their faults are patterns of industry and economy, set us an excellent example. They turn everything to account.

2nd.—Another notable feature of the streets of Paris is the absence of abject poverty and wretchedness.

When King George—not of blessed memory—visited Edinburgh, he asked, it is said, on casting his eyes over the well-conditioned and well-attired thousands who thronged the streets to see a live king, “Where are the poor?” If by that term we understand the class who with unwashed faces, tangled hair, emaciated forms, and ragged attire swarm in certain districts of our large towns, the question may be justly asked of Paris. In London, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, your steps, unless they are confined to the most fashionable streets, are ever and anon crossed by some human creature who is the picture of misery ; and with swarms of half-naked children, women clad in scanty rags, men crushed in heart and clad in seedy black, and, most painful sight of

all, sallow, sickly, skinny infants, whose weary heads lie on the shoulders of hags that carry horrid oaths on their tongue and the fire of whisky in their eye, these cities have large districts through which it almost breaks one's heart to walk. Now the remarkable absence of such sights in its streets, seems to me the best sight in Paris. The Louvre with its magnificent galleries of pictures and statues, the Champs Élysées or gardens of the Tuileries and Luxembourg, where, all arranged with exquisite taste, lines of beautiful trees afford a grateful shade, white marble statues gleam amid the green foliage, and fountains of costly materials and graceful forms send forth their murmur and throw up to the bright sunshine showers of liquid diamonds, yielded me no pleasure equal to that of walking among the homes of the humblest classes. I saw no broken-hearted woman, no pining child, no skeleton infant to whom life was a misfortune, and the grave would be a welcome refuge.

Mendicancy there, begging by man, woman, or child, is suppressed, I may remark, with the vigour of the French police. Still I thought it possible that, though no ragged objects were prowling about the fashionable or busy parts of the town, the faubourgs of the working classes, and those old and very poor streets which lie under the shadow of its Cathedral towers, might show a display of rags and wretchedness corresponding to our own. To settle this question, we went away on a voyage of discovery ; making for the densely peopled quarters of the Isle de la Cité,—the Paris of the Romans—where, as in most other capital and cathedral towns, the Courts

of Justice stand among those who are most amenable to their laws, and the degraded and godless habits of the people may have given birth to the saying, "The nearer the church the farther from grace." The houses there are of great height, and look as old as the grey towers of Notre Dame; the streets, which are very narrow, are intersected by lanes or alleys, not unlike our Edinburgh closes. Some of the trades the inhabitants pursue are foul, and all of them are of the humblest kind. If the men were not ruffians, many looked like *roughs*; indeed, so dark and sombre were these alleys, and so forbidding the appearance of their inhabitants, that the ladies of our party could hardly muster courage to accompany us as, long familiar with worse scenes at home, we pushed along. It is an act of justice to the lowest of these French people to say that all our questions were courteously answered—their national politeness blooming there like a flower among ruins. We encountered neither injury nor insult. Now here are the statistics of our voyage as noted down on returning to our "pension":—"Saw but one dirty woman; saw but one man in ragged attire; saw no child without shoes to its feet or with a torn dress on its back; saw no sickly nursling in the arms of such mothers as disgrace our St. Giles', Cowgates, and Gallowgates at home." An extraordinary record! To many it may seem incredible, yet it is an exact copy of our notes; and sets forth the plain, unvarnished facts of the case. Boast as we may, on the one hand, of our Sabbaths, our pure faith, our superior and more general piety, and charge Paris as we may on the other with its

bloody revolutions, its infidelity and its vices ; alas, for us ! it contrasts, not compares, with our large cities by an almost entire absence in its streets of that abject poverty and extreme wretchedness, of that wreck of human happiness and hearts before which Philanthropy at home stands aghast, and almost helpless.

Now to me, this the most pleasant, was the most puzzling feature of Paris. Not to gratify an idle curiosity, but in the hope that the investigation might suggest some useful lessons to ourselves, I made many inquiries to find a key to it ; and it would appear that, with much poverty and wretchedness, no doubt, within its walls, the comparatively happy state of Paris, like the unhappy one of Ireland, which some refer to the prevalence of popery, others to the presence of the Saxon, others to the practice of absenteeism, and others still to other things, is due not to one, but to a number of causes. The account of these, with other matters, must be reserved for the next paper.

This only meanwhile I may say, that though, as I shall show, the Roman Catholic Order of Sisters of Charity have their share in the good work, the cause of this happy state of matters is not to be found in popery and the priests. With the mass of the people the priests have no influence whatever—a condition of things with which infidelity has something, but politics still more, to do. We are not to conclude that the Parisian *ouvriers* are, like many of the upper classes, cold, confirmed sceptics. Numbers have, though dim and imperfect, some faith in the divine authority of the Bible and in the

mission of our Saviour—only they do not believe in popery ; nor regard its priests as other than the tools of despotism and the enemies of the liberties of France. They have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, how these came forth with stole, and crosses, and holy water to bless the trees of liberty which France had watered with her blood ; but no sooner saw it to their own advantage and that of their pliant but ambitious church to pursue a different policy, than they abandoned, if they did not betray, the cause of freedom. When the poor workman, *in articulo mortis*, lies indifferent to all around him, his wife or some neighbour may fetch a priest from the church—which he has never entered—with his holy oil to administer extreme unction ; and, so be that the fees are paid, the rights of the dead may be administered to his body, and masses said for his soul. But, however he may die or descend into the grave, he lived to laugh at the Church of Rome, to treat her ordinances with contempt, and look on her priests with suspicion. In illustration of this, let me relate a fact told to me by one of the city missionaries. One day he entered a room where a tailor, seated on his board, pursued his occupation—talking the while to his wife, who employed herself in household affairs, with a tongue that went as fast as his needle. So soon as his eye fell on the missionary his vivacity was gone ; he coldly returned the other's salutation ; while his spouse moved stealthily about the room like a cat, eyeing the stranger with sulky and suspicious looks. There was something wrong. My acquaintance tried, but in vain, to thaw the ice ; and


was about to withdraw in despair, when he happened to make it known that he was a Protestant missionary. *Eh bien!* In an instant the cloud passed from the tailor's face; and, dropping the needle to stretch out his hand and give the other a hearty welcome, he exclaimed, "Why did you not tell us so when you came in?—we took you for a Jesuit, or some agent of the priests." The truth is, that the Roman Catholic Church in France, though retaining influence enough to trample somewhat on the rights of Protestants and obstruct the progress of truth, though not powerless for evil, is in a large measure powerless for good—even such good as good men in her aim at, and might in other circumstances do. In proof of that, let me produce a high authority. I refer to a very distinguished man, Rousseau St. Hilaire, a professor of the University of Paris, and one of the best and greatest men whom I have ever had the honour and happiness to know. Speaking of the Protestant Church of France, he says:—"In a religious point of view, though we have little hold of the peasant, we have some over the soldier. Those drawn from the country districts, on coming to our cities, bring with them, in simplicity and ingenuousness, virtues unknown to our workmen. All is new to them in the town, and it is not always its vices which they learn. Some have there become acquainted with a Gospel of which they had never heard in their hamlets. The discipline of our Church pleases them; within her they find themselves in their element. Let those bear witness who are seeking to bring them under the power of the Gospel. When

ready to embark for the Crimea, or for China, when face to face with the ships which were to carry them away, at the sad thought of a departure which might never have a return, have they ever been seen to trample on the Gospel which others offered them? No doubt some of the grains of precious seed have been trampled under foot or choked by thorns ; but in proof that others have germinated, I appeal to those good brave men belonging to the army whom we are so happy to meet in our churches. There they are, brave men. Who does not know that it requires more courage to withstand the raillery of their comrades than to take a battery by assault? Nor are they, I am sure, worse soldiers, because, by the side of the flag of France, they dare to raise that of Jesus Christ. But it may be asked, does **not** the powerful organisation of Catholicism, which wraps round men of all ages and all conditions, exercise no influence on the people of our country districts? Will not birth, death, disease, have a powerful influence in bringing back to the priest those who have escaped from him? In short, and taking France as a whole, we do not hesitate to reply, No! The sale of the property of the clergy, nearly all acquired by the rural population, has made a wide breach between the priest and the peasant. Indeed, the evil is of older date. The Romish Church, in putting a price on the sacraments of the Church, and forcing the poor country *curés* (clergy) to draw a part of their small stipends from ill-disposed or insolvent debtors, has perverted all their relations with their flocks. *If, here and there, in France Catholicism has retained an actual influence, it is over*

women ; over men it has almost none. We do not deny that in such and such a district it has preserved its power through the influence of exceptional circumstances ; but at an average, so to speak, even when it wishes the real good of men, and it wishes many things else besides, '*Le Catholicisme est impuissant*'—Popery is powerless."

THE STREETS OF PARIS.

II.

N the spring of 1827, we saw the Carnival at Paris. Its scenes of fun, feasting, dancing, and delirious merriment usher in Lent, or the *Carême*, as it is called in France ; when, to commemorate the forty days which our Lord spent in the wilderness, “being an hungered,” every pious Catholic is supposed to live on fish and *soupe maigre*,—not that the rules of the Church on abstaining from the use of animal food are nowadays generally observed. Even at Quimper, the capital of the department of Finisterre, which is one of the most Popish districts in France, we remarked that the “bons catholiques” were few ; most of the company at the *table d’hôte* eating as heartily of flesh meat as we heretics did. Indeed, we might have forgotten Lent altogether, but that on its one or two last days we had to content ourselves with fish. This proved no great hardship ; the dressing was so excellent, and the variety so great. Oysters in the shell led the van ; the second course consisted of mussels, in the shell also ; then came sardines ; then

whiting ; then flounders ; then cod, or what the Scotch people call *hardfish* ; then soles ; then mullet ; then pike ; then skate ; eels, swimming in oil, bringing up the rear. Such is Lent ! What a farce !

To fortify themselves for this period of mortification to the flesh, the Carnival, of which I was speaking, is a day devoted to indulgence—eating, drinking, dancing, making merry, without having, for they do not even fast now, the excuse of those of old who said “let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” One of the amusements of an institution which belongs to Roman Catholic countries, and which the *Statistiques de la France* for 1863, at page 30, prove to have a most pernicious influence on the morals of the country, consists in men and women putting on masks, and walking the streets in these, as well as engaging in all the fun and follies of the day. While some are content with a simple black domino, others dress like Turks, or Tartars ; some carry enormous humps on their backs ; others show noses nearly a foot long ; in short, all manner of odd and grotesque forms parade the streets to their own, and the public, amusement. I remember one figure at the Carnival in 1827, which puzzled the Parisians and greatly amused them by its drollery. It was a person seated on a donkey—presenting, as it advanced, the form, features, and dress of a beautiful woman ; but appearing, when it had passed, a man as ugly as the other was pretty. It was impossible to tell whether a man or a woman bestrode that donkey. One face was certainly a mask, but the imitation was so clever, that the spectator could not discover which was the

true and which the false face—all the more, that the figure kept constantly turning from side to side, a sort of representation in one person of “Beauty and the Beast.” More than the shield of the old legend which in its two faces, one of gold and the other of silver, presented points of comparison rather than of contrast, this figure of the Carnival, in one aspect so attractive but in another so ugly, may be taken as a symbol of Paris, France, and the French. They present strong points of contrast. In some respects the French are very loveable, presenting a character and disposition which win our esteem; in others they are so much the reverse, that we have been sometimes tempted to wish, lest the contamination of their habits should be carried into society at home, that the sea which rolled between us and them were a gulf impassable. Were we writing for our neighbours across the Channel, it might be our duty to direct attention to what was defective in their morals and manners; but as, apart from the meanness of abusing the absent, it will be most profitable to ourselves to dwell on those features of the French and of their capital which we would do well to imitate, I resume the subject of my last paper.

I have shown how Paris presented a notable and admirable contrast to our own large cities in the absence from its streets of abject poverty and wretchedness. I now proceed to relate the causes, so far as I could ascertain them, of this very pleasant and happy state of matters. In doing so, may I hope to suggest something of practical usefulness to those Christians and philanthropists at home who “sigh and cry over the abominations of the land?”

First. One reason given to us by very intelligent Frenchmen for less abject poverty and wretchedness in their country than in ours was, that through the operation of the French law, wealth and the comforts of life were more equally distributed in France than in Great Britain. That my readers may be able to judge for themselves what weight there lies in this, let me explain the difference between the law of France and that of our country in regard to the disposal of property. In the case of entailed estates—though the law has been modified, and, I will add, mollified of late—the whole landed property with us passes into the hands of the eldest son ; and so the other members of the family, who have been reared in luxurious habits, and never taught to earn their bread, may be left without a penny. An equally unfortunate result follows in all cases where a man whose wealth lies in land, or heritable estate, dies intestate, leaving no will. Now in France the law, which approaches to what is called the *udal*, in opposition to the *feudal*, system, is quite different. It even interferes with what might be reckoned man's rightful liberty, in so far as it dictates to him the manner in which, to a large extent, he is to dispose of his property by will. He may indeed dispose of a fourth of it according to his own pleasure ; that share he may bequeath to any one member of his family in preference to the rest, or even to a stranger ; but the remainder, the other three-fourths, must be equally divided among his children, without distinction of son or daughter, eldest or youngest child. Now, whatever may be said for or against this law, its effect is certainly to produce a

more equal diffusion of property ; and to prevent that enormous accumulation of wealth in the hands of a comparatively small number of individuals, by the side of which, as if it were its shadow, great poverty is always found. Usually, the one bears a remarkable relation to the other ; and just as the brighter the sunlight, the blacker the shadow, so, attempt to explain or remedy it as you may, the greater the wealth of some in any community, the greater the poverty of others. It seems, to borrow an illustration from the "gentle art," to be with men as with fishes ; for I have observed that in those lochs where the *salmo ferox* is found, the trouts, though numerous, are usually small ; and so it is equally certain, say Frenchmen, that where the law or customs of a country encourage large accumulations, rather than the general distribution, of property, great poverty will always be found. In France, wealth is more equally distributed than in Great Britain, and therefore, they say, there is much less, either in appearance or reality, of abject misery and wretchedness with them than with ourselves.

Second. The remarkable appearance of decency and comfort presented by the humblest classes in Paris as compared with the same class among ourselves, is in my opinion, and in that of most intelligent Frenchmen, to be chiefly attributed to the greater sobriety of the French people. Looking to Ireland, to the Roman Catholic cantons of Switzerland, to the swarms of mendicants that infest the streets of Naples and Rome, or here to Quimper, the capital, as I have said, of the most Popish department of France, where beggars, thick as blackberries,

are squatting in rows at the doors of the cathedral, and hunting one through the streets, it would appear that rags and Romanism, Popery and pauperism go together. But the connection between drinking and destitution is more certain still; and to the comparative absence of the first we are to attribute the comparative absence of the second in the streets of Paris. The fortnight we spent there on our way to Brittany often found us in the poorer parts of the city; yet there, save in three cases, we never saw man or woman under the influence of drink—a happy state of matters, and one which exactly corresponds with all my former observations of a city which I have repeatedly visited, and where I once spent five or six months of my student life. In the heat of their opposition to the bill by which Mr. Gladstone (much to his honour) sought, among other reasons for its introduction, to change the habits of our country from potations of fiery spirits to the use of light French wines, some of my associates in the Total Abstinence cause seemed to think that I had, on former occasions, painted a too glowing picture of the sobriety of Paris and of the French. I was therefore the more careful at this visit to observe the true state of matters; and I repeat the statement, that with the exception mentioned, and that also, perhaps, of some young conscripts on a balloting day at the Hôtel de Ville, in the whole fortnight we spent in Paris, we, though often passing through the poorest as well as finest parts of the city, never saw more than three persons drunk. The vice of drunkenness, besides many other vices, is, no doubt, to be found in Paris, still the

fact of its being so seldom seen in her streets demonstrates that it exists to a much less extent among the French poor and working classes than among our own. Other vices, concealed under the mask of virtues, may impose on us—hypocrisy passing itself off for piety; superstition for devotion; falsehood for truth; and the grossest licentiousness, shining with French polish, for gallantry and politeness. The strictness of police laws may preserve the streets from the obtrusive appearance of other forms of vice, but neither *gendarme*, nor *sergent de ville*, nor policeman, whether armed with the French sword or the English baton, can make a drunk man articulate, or walk, or look so as to pass for a total abstainer. Drunkenness is like the ointment in the right hand which betrayeth itself; and in the case of a community where it does not make much appearance, we are entitled to infer that it has not much existence. But not content with my own observations and the conclusions to which they led, I made this matter one of special inquiry in conversing with city missionaries, and others well acquainted with the habits and homes of the poorer classes. While freely and frankly acknowledging their irreligion and ungodliness, and such habits of vice as they were addicted to, they all bore testimony to their comparative sobriety; and to that virtue, chiefly, they attributed the absence of that abject poverty and utter wretchedness which, in happy contrast with our cities, characterises the streets of Paris. I give the very words of one with whom I passed a few pleasant hours in visiting the families of his district—some being converts to Protestantism, others still, at

least in name, Roman Catholics.—Monsieur Durro said: “Save among the *chiffonniers*,” the most degraded class in Paris, “a drunken man is seldom seen; and a drunken woman, almost never.”

From my knowledge of the state and habits of our lapsed and degraded classes, among whom I have spent years of labour, I am certain that the theory of the French is correct. Drinking habits are the curse of our people; and whether Christians and philanthropists at home are, or are not, prepared, with the view of saving men and women both for this world and the next, to join with me and others the Total Abstinence cause, surely religion and humanity call on them to lay the axe to the root of this enormous evil; and for that end to use all such means as wisdom dictates, and conscience approves. How drunkenness emasculates our power as well as disgraces our character, was oddly yet pithily expressed by the Frenchman, who said that he thanked God that we Anglo-Saxons were a drunken race; for, said he, had it been otherwise, you would have conquered the world.

Third. It were injustice to the Frenchwoman not to state that to her is due a considerable measure of that absence of wretchedness and poverty which characterises the streets of Paris. Call her, if you choose, and as some do, frivolous, or as others, deceitful, she has a taste and sense of propriety which would make her ashamed to show herself with an unwashed face, or send forth her husband or children with a rag on their backs or a hole in their dress. In Paris and elsewhere you may see people with mended, but none with ragged clothes; so

that until we came to Brittany, where the people are as remarkable for their Popish bigotry, and deep drinking, and dreadful swearing, as for their antique and picturesque costumes, we almost never saw a Frenchwoman with a rag on her back or a spot on her face ; and even here, the women, speaking of them generally, as they ply the distaff, while they tend their cows in the field, or walk the roads knitting, or sit at their windows sewing, shew a tidiness that is as remarkable as their industry. In fact, for neatness of attire, respect for personal appearance both in herself and in her family, and habits of industry, the Frenchwoman is a pattern to the world. Scarcely ever do you find them what the Scotch people call *hand-idle* ; and slatterns never. The girl who keeps a shop is busy with some piece of work when customers do not require her attention. The woman who sits by her stall on the open street, with her feet on a box of lighted charcoal to keep them warm, is usually sewing or knitting ; and only lifts her head from her work to say, when she becomes aware of your presence, *Que voulez-vous, monsieur ?* And but yesterday, in walking through the weekly market at Quimper, where the Breton women sat all tidily attired, with towers and wings of snowy linen on their heads, and on a table before them the produce of their dairy in curiously carved pats and pillars of first-rate butter, I was greatly struck with the spectacle of industry which the scene presented. Hardly one not engaged with a customer but was busy with wire or needle—a lively as well as pleasant spectacle, for their tongues went as fast as their tools. I have seen in the

humble homes of our own country how a taste for tidiness and habits of industry will throw over poverty itself a decent appearance ; and characterised as the French woman is by these, to her may be in some measure attributed that happy absence of the appearance of extreme and abject wretchedness which distinguishes the streets of Paris.

We boast of our superior virtues, but there are minor virtues in regard to which we would do well to take a lesson from France. It is nothing to the purpose to say that the respect which is paid to the personal, outward appearance here, is but the whitewashing of a sepulchre ; the embroidered pall which covers the coffin and corruption. Whatever immorality may lie concealed in France under the appearance of outward decency—nor do I deny its existence, although, according to the Scotch proverb, “ Ill doers are ill dreaders,” I believe it has often been greatly exaggerated—the immorality in France is certainly not owing to those habits of industry and to that taste for personal decency which eminently and honourably characterise its women. Any way, why should an abhorrence of rags and dirt, why should a taste for neat attire, why should clean hands and face not be associated with the highest Christian virtues ? These simple and attractive graces are not vice ; and so far is the absence of them from being a proof of piety, that it is a blot on it. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ; and experience proves, as the old divine said, that holiness and cleanliness are nearly allied—a remark which owes its triteness to its truth. Who has not, or

may not have observed, that chimney-sweeps, colliers, forgemen, glass-blowers, and others whose occupation is incompatible with personal cleanliness, are apt, unless where God's grace or good training exerts a counteracting influence, to lose respect for themselves and sink into degraded habits. I know that virtue and genuine piety may be found under a most ungraceful exterior, as a pearl in its dark, foul shell; but the gem is best set off in a ring of gold. And he is the truest friend of virtue who associates, and seeks to associate, the graces of religion with those of nature. Thus we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and give heed to the Apostle's warning, "take care that your good be not evil spoken of."

Fourth. Not the least important cause of the absence of abject poverty and wretchedness in the streets of Paris, is to be found in their method of managing the affairs of the poor. They have nothing that can properly be called a Poor Rate, or Poor Law. In France, none are entitled to claim relief as a right; nor, as with us, are the funds which go to meet the wants of poverty, either raised by compulsory assessment, or distributed by the hands of mere officials. What is true of Paris, applies equally to the whole kingdom. From the funds of the different Departments into which the country is divided, Government contributes about half the sum required to meet the wants of the poor; the other half is raised by the voluntary contributions of the people. So the French are not encouraged in habits of indolence, and improvidence, and dependence, by feeling, as our people do, that however they may waste their time and money, they

have a certain fund to fall back on for support, and as good a legal right to the gains of other men's industry as a proprietor to the rents of his estate. The Poor Law system, as imported very much from England, and wrought now in Scotland, is working sad havoc on those domestic affections, and that self-respect and independence, for which our humblest Scotch people were once distinguished. In their unwillingness to become paupers, in the shame they felt to eat the bread that was not wet with the sweat of their brow, and in the hardships which sons and daughters endured rather than have the parents they revered receive a penny from the poor fund, our people nobly illustrated the contemptuous adage of "Scotch pride and Scotch poverty." I believe the country, and the poor themselves, would be much happier without a Poor Law. Under its operation the pride which ennobled the poverty is gone; and the poverty has increased, is increasing, and, unless a remedy is applied, will increase. We regret this, not so much on account of the burdens which indolence imposes on industry, as on account of its degrading and demoralising effect on the character of our people. It is loosening the ties by which God binds parent to child and child to parent, and destroying those sacred affections which, next to the fear and love of God himself, are the very salt and salvation of society. The poor themselves will be the heaviest sufferers in the long run; Poor Law Union Workhouses, these great and gloomy prisons, are already rising throughout the country to check the evils of the existing system—cold and miserable refuges for such as in former and better days spent

the evening of life by the warm fireside of a son or daughter, who, revering their grey hairs, and tenderly ministering to their wants, supported, as nature dictates, and the law of God requires, those in feeble old age, who, in their helpless infancy, had supported them.

But the most potent element for good in the management of the poor, as conducted in Paris, and generally throughout France, lies in the manner in which the funds are distributed. This is not the work of mere paid officials, or of Boards, who perhaps consider their duty discharged when they have raised their funds by a compulsory taxation, and spent them by the hands of their officers. The system which is practised in Paris, with such happy results, is, in spirit and genius, the same as that which, in opposition to a Poor Law, was advocated by Dr. Chalmers ; and which, so long as he remained in Glasgow as minister in the parish of St. John's, he carried out, with triumphant success. The funds applicable to the case of the poor in Paris—as well that part which is contributed by the Government, as that which is raised by voluntary contributions—reach them through the hands of voluntary and Christian agents. These, with a kindness and philanthropy worthy of the highest praise, devote themselves in the wards of hospitals and amid the dwellings of the poor, to the alleviation of suffering and the supply of want—to raise the fallen, to reclaim the vicious, to heal the sick, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked. These are the *Sœurs de Charité*, or Sisters of Mercy, as they are called. They belong to the Roman Catholic Church. There are different orders of them,

indicated by their different dresses—almost all unbecoming, and fitted, if not intended, to extirpate any root of vanity remaining in woman's heart. They wear cross and beads; and are usually, I believe, to employ the expression of an Irishwoman, "hot Catholics." But it were a bigotry as blind as Popery itself, not to see and honour their merits; and be ready also, within certain limits, to follow their laudable example. I have not had an opportunity of seeing how they conduct themselves in the houses of the poor; but when, as an amateur student, I walked the hospitals of Paris, I used to admire the motherly kindness of these excellent nurses. I abhor Popery as much as any man; but he ought to abhor himself who could shut his eyes to the useful labours and estimable properties of women, who, though Papists, out of love to God and suffering humanity, withdraw from the comforts of home and the gaieties of the world to spend their days and nights in the presence of disease and death; to brave the dangers and endure the horrors of an hospital. It is by the hands of this class that the charitable funds of Paris are distributed. When a case of want, disease, or death occurs and is reported at the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* of the district or parish, it is committed to one of these women. Off she flies on the wings of mercy. She seeks the moral as well as material good of the poor: she stands by the bed of disease with her own hands to administer medicine; the bread she carries to feed the hungry is sweetened by her gentle kindness; she pleads with the drunkard on behalf of his wife and starving children; she stirs up the idle to help

themselves ; “ she separates between the clean and unclean ”—avoiding the abuses of indiscriminate charity, refusing allowances that would go to the drinking-shop, and aiding the modest, virtuous poverty which our system often leaves to suffering and cold neglect. No doubt these women are not faultless. To some considerable extent their narrow creed bounds and restrains their sympathies. Instances are not rare in which they seek to make the charity which they distribute a means of promoting the interests of the Roman Catholic Church ; and those of the Reformed Faith do not complain without reason that the poor Protestant does not always receive fair dealing at the hands of the Sisters of Charity. Still, those who made **this** complaint to me, freely acknowledged that to the kind, considerate, and discriminating labours of these women Paris owed not a little of that absence of squalid, ragged, abject wretchedness which fills some of the streets of our large cities with spectacles of pity and of horror.

In the noble dome of St. Peter's, in the beautiful towers of Cologne, in the matchless spire of Strasburg, in the exquisite tracery of St. Ouen, we find the sublime and graceful in connection with Roman Catholic worship. We admire—we do more—we imitate them ; and if it is right to take a lesson in architecture from Popish countries, it is better still to copy any good example which they may set us in redressing the wrongs and relieving the sufferings of the poor.

The principle so happily illustrated in Paris, is not one which belongs to the Church of Rome, but to the Church

of Christ. Before either pope or Popery, Jesus Christ, in that wondrous scene where, girt with a towel and falling on bended knee, He washed his disciples' feet, taught his people to perform acts of *personal* kindness, and stoop to the lowliest offices of brotherly love and Christian charity. And God had, long before that, thundered out these great words loud over the heads of those who observed the offices of religion, but neglected the claims of charity—"Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

Why should our churches at home leave the poor to the care of mere officials? I know some indeed charged with this duty who discharge it in a Christ-like spirit; and though they wear no peculiar garb, nor belong to any organised system of sisterhood, we have thousands of women of all ranks, and belonging to all churches, who descend into the lowest abodes of poverty, and without any form or vows devote their lives to the glory of God and the good of humanity. But why should not these agents be multiplied a thousand-fold; and without introducing any orders of sisterhood, why should not our Protestant churches lay aside their prejudices and wretched jealousies to co-operate in some well-organised

and happy scheme which would afford to tens and hundreds of thousands of Christian women a field for their love and labours, not less profitable to themselves than to the poor? Divided with skill, distributed by kindly hands, accompanied by a sympathy that would soften the hearts, and smiles that would lighten the homes, and counsels that would improve the habits of the poor, such charity would change the face of society, and make good these noble words :—

The quality of Mercy is not strain'd ;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from Heaven
Upon the place beneath ; it is twice blessed ;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes ;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown ;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But Mercy is above this sceptred sway ;
It is an attribute to God himself.

In addition to their cleanliness and the absence of poverty, the streets of Paris are remarkable for the absence of the appearance of vice. It is not there as with us, where, to the offence of modesty and the corruption of morals, vice parades our streets ; and obtrudes herself as openly on the public eye as if the occupation of those who are at once her tools, slaves, and victims, were as respectable as it is infamous. As if we indicated an intention to lay rash hands on our country's ark, some people cry out, What, would you meddle with the liberty of the subject? The liberty of the subject! Personal, political, ecclesiastical liberty, is worth all the blood that

has been shed for it; but we are sick of hearing the name of liberty applied to such a matter. When the state of our streets is such that watchful parents are in many cases afraid to send out their children, or servants, on honest business of an evening, the magistrate has ceased to be "a terror to evil-doers, and a praise and protection to those that do well." In such circumstances—and they are ours—the liberty that virtue should enjoy is sacrificed to the licence of vice. Now the difference, and a very important one it is, between Paris on the one hand, and our large towns on the other, lies here, that there people have to seek vice, while with us vice is allowed to seek them. To copy the French in giving a quasi-legal sanction to licentiousness in order to ameliorate or restrain its evils, is a measure to which I hope our country will never consent. The decency of our streets may be secured without any such means. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of those who live on the wages of iniquity are as well known to the police as the "habit and repute" thieves of the town; and the fear that any respectable woman might be cleared off the street is a mere bugbear—as worthless as would have been the objection to the law against vagrancy, that honest men might be taken up for rogues. We denounce the French for such police regulations as seem to grant a legal recognition to vice, and at the same time allow it more freedom than if it were legalised. This is surely absurd. It is as if those who altogether objected to Government licensing the sale of spirits were to consent that any man should have the right to open a drinking-shop at his own

pleasure, to the detriment of the peace and morals of his neighbourhood. I ask people at home to look on the streets of Paris, and make their own as decent. And it is, in the first place, no answer to say that the French after all are in point of morals not better, but worse, than ourselves. Admitting that, surely their inferior morality is as little owing to the greater decency of their streets as to the greater sobriety of their people—even as our superior virtues are as little due to the greater indecency of our streets as to the greater drunkenness of our people. Not to these, but to our religious advantages and purer faith, to our Bibles and Sabbaths, we owe the superiority which we claim ; and which I do not deny. Nor, in the second place, are we to be silenced by the cry, Acts of parliament, magistrates and policemen, cannot make men moral or religious ! What cry so silly and senseless ? Who says, or ever said, they could ? But these agencies, like flood dykes, can restrain the overflowings of vice ; they can take stumbling-blocks out of the way ; they can protect the unwary from her snares ; and by making and executing laws in the spirit of the prayer “lead us not into temptation,” they can do much to rear up, in a virtuous and vigorous people, what, more than standing armies or iron navies, will prove our abiding glory and sure defence. In connection with this matter, I deem it a public and sacred duty to correct certain mis-statements, which some have rashly made, and others have eagerly seized on to point their sneers at religion, and blacken the character of our country—especially the northern section of the island.

With her famous religious struggles, the severer discipline of her churches, and more strict views of Sabbath observance, poor Scotland has always formed a favourite subject of attack with free-thinkers and loose livers. If they catch, or fancy they catch, her tripping, her shame seems to afford them (some being her own children) a sort of fiendish gratification ; like Indian savages round their victim, they dance with joy ; they tell it in Gath, and publish it in the streets of Askelon. Statements touching the number of illegitimate births in England, but especially in Scotland, are constantly cast in our teeth by foreigners ; and, given on the authority of writers at home, these furnish infidels with an argument against Christianity, and Papists with sneers at Protestantism. See, says the libertine or worldling, all that comes of your Bibles and Sabbaths, your revivals and religious meetings, your preachings and prayers ! A set of Pharisees ! read these statements from the hands of your own countrymen, and blush for shame ; you are no better, but worse than us.

We deny this. In the first place, those who traduce our character, either conceal, or are ignorant of, the fact that there is an enormous amount of immorality abroad which is not disclosed by statistics—an immorality, happily all but unknown in our own country, which springs from conjugal infidelity ; and that, again, in part at least, from what is equally notorious,—this namely, that marriage abroad is much less commonly an affair of the heart than of pecuniary and other considerations. I knew a man who, on informing a friend of his purpose

of marriage, and being asked, who are you to be married to?—replied, to 56000. ! and I have found one uniform, concurrent testimony to the fact, that it is in this spirit that a large number of marriages in France are formed. This, as it needs no wit to divine, results, and must result, in social evils, which, though they may reduce society to a mass of festering corruption, do not figure in tables of statistics. Many things, indeed, are to be taken into consideration before these can be regarded as a fair, sure test of the comparative morality of different peoples. Bad as our tables of illegitimacy are, much as they are to be deplored, and loudly as they call on pastors and parents, masters and guardians, to do their utmost to check our social evils, if they who make so much against us out of them told us all the truth about the Continent, our morality would appear vastly superior to that of France, or Italy, or any other Popish, or semi-infidel country. There are other and even surer tests of morality than statistical tables. Besides being imperfect in their details, they often leave concealed evils more horrible than any which they reveal. What conclusions are to be drawn from the house-sign which meets you everywhere in the streets of Paris, and of other towns in France, *Sage-femme qui prend des pensionnaires*? or from this, that no young lady is considered as doing that which is either safe or respectable, who ventures out into the street in broad daylight without having, in a servant or mother or brother or father, a guardian and protector at her side?

But if people will go to statistics, to statistics let

them go. I have gone over the Government Returns for France in the *Statistiques de la France, Mouvement de la Population pendant les Années 1858, 1859, et 1860, deuxième Série, tome xi*. There are details in that volume with which, God be thanked, we have nothing corresponding. But without entering on these, let me keep to the matter in hand. Well, let us take Paris, the capital of France, and Quimper, the chief town of the department of Finisterre. I do not need to inform the most ignorant of my readers, that neither London, the capital of England, nor Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, nor even Aberdeen, the chief town of the county of that name, and the worst according to statistics in Scotland, presents anything like this state of morals.

	Births Legitimate.	Births Illegitimate.
In 1858, in Paris . . .	25,694 . . .	11,757
„ in Quimper . . .	271 . . .	123

which makes nearly one-third of the whole number born in these cities illegitimate.*

Admitting that there are circumstances which, if taken into account, would to some extent modify our judgment on the immoral character of Paris, Lyons, and Quimper,

* I have also obtained the official return for Lyons, which, standing thus, is only a shade better :—

	Births Legitimate.	Births Illegitimate.
In 1862 . . .	44,368 . . .	15,655

Instead of every third or fourth, in London it is only every twenty-fourth (the statistics are, however, not perfectly accurate); in Edinburgh and Leith only every twelfth; in Greenock only every twentieth; and even in Aberdeen only every sixth child which is illegitimate.

more than enough remains, even on the ground of statistics, to silence the tongues which have sought to wound our religion through the sides of our country.

Now, in regard especially to Scotland, which, though one in faith with England, yet holding stricter, if not sterner, views on some matters of Sabbath observance and practical piety, is a stock subject with Roman Catholics and infidels—covert and open, foreign and domestic. With what an air of triumph have appeals been made to the Government Tables of Statistics, to show that the number of illegitimate births is greater on the north than on the south side of the Tweed. Look at these Tables, men have said, and be done with your northern gabble about Sabbaths, sermons, revivals, and the points or principles of your endless Church controversies ! Well, though we have never hesitated to lay open the sores of our country for the purpose of healing them, we were happy to have something to say in answer to that taunt. We appealed to these very official Tables as proving this, as establishing the fact beyond all doubt or controversy, that the counties in Scotland, such as Sutherland and Ross-shire, most distinguished for their high Protestant principles and strict observance of the Lord's Day, were the very counties most distinguished for a low rate of illegitimate births—in other words, for their high morality. From that notable circumstance, as well as from other things, we felt sure that there lurked some great error in the official Tables, or in the conclusions that were drawn from them ; and though we have no wish, but the contrary, to disparage England, there is no generous English-

man but will sympathise with us in feeling happy that the error is at length detected and acknowledged ; and that Scotland can be no longer a stock subject with men who seem to like nothing so much as to have a hit at religion, and expose the failings of its professors.

Justice requires that the true state of the case should be known. It is seen in the following extracts from the Census of Scotland for 1861, published in March of this year.

“ Table XXVII. Number of unmarried women who annually put themselves in the way of becoming mothers, and their proportion to the total unmarried women, from fifteen to forty-five years of age :—

	Number.	Per Centage.	Ratio: 1 in every
England: Official Numbers.	156,757	6·9	14·4
Ditto, corrected ditto .	227,757	10·0	9·0
Scotland	30,947	7·3	13·1

“ Report, pages xxxix. and xl.

“ The registration of the illegitimate births is so imperfect in England that it is not fair to compare the above facts relative to the unmarried women of Scotland with those of England, if we adhered to the official number of illegitimate births as published in the Registrar-General's Reports. By his own acknowledgment before a committee of the House of Commons in the Irish Registration Bills in 1861, that officer admitted that ‘the registration of births in England is defective ; that we

lose 20,000 births a-year in England, and the chief part that escapes us are the births of illegitimates in towns.' As the Census Commissioners of England for 1861, however, on much surer data, state that 369,485 children in ten years, or 36,950 annually, are left unregistered, and although the probability is that by far the largest number of these is illegitimate, it is doing no injustice to England to assume that 20,000 at all events of those whose births escape registration are illegitimate, the accompanying Tables are accordingly drawn up on that assumption, &c.

"As 355 married women between the ages of fifteen and forty-five are, however, annually required in England to produce 100 legitimate children, and the unmarried women of that country may be supposed to produce children in the same proportion, according to the official or uncorrected numbers 6·9 per cent., or one in every 14·4, of the unmarried women in England annually put themselves in the way of becoming mothers. Where the proper correction, however, is made for the illegitimate births which escape registration, it appears that 227,757 unmarried women, being exactly 10 per cent., or one in every nine unmarried women in England between the ages of fifteen and forty-five annually put themselves in the way of becoming mothers, *being a much larger proportion than in Scotland.*"

I add nothing by way of comment to these extracts. They speak for themselves, and should cover with confusion those who have been in the habit of aspersing the social manners and religious views of Scotland. Let me only express a hope that those who have propagated the

scandal which these Tables disprove, will, though it can no longer supply them with a weapon of attack on Scottish Sabbaths and Scottish strictness, be brave and honest enough to give to the refutation a circulation as wide as they have given to the charge. Any way, it is satisfactory to feel that our island, the home of freedom and asylum of the oppressed, whether regard be had to its southern or northern division, can lift up an unblushing forehead in the face of the nations of Europe. Secure from revolutions which have shaken their thrones and inflicted on their countries all the crimes and cruelties of war, she stands calm and secure on the broad and solid foundation of a superior morality and a truer faith ; and in her unparalleled dominion, extensive commerce, unrivalled energy, fullest liberty, the honour of her name, the plenty which fills her cup, the peace which blesses and the bravery which guards her shores, she presents the grandest example the world ever saw of the truth—

“ RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION.”

SUNDAY IN PARIS, AND FRENCH PROTESTANTISM.



ANOTHER remarkable feature of the streets of Paris is their aspect on the Lord's day. The fourth commandment of the Decalogue is openly set at nought ; and this in a way to shock those whose ideas of Sunday observance are not so strict, or—as they would say—severe and Judaical as ours in Scotland. In the morning and forenoon of the Sunday the tide of business flows on much as usual ; so that a stranger might fancy he had mistaken the day of the week. Even such as account themselves good Catholics—and these are comparatively few in Paris—while they devote the morning to religion, give the forenoon to money, and the afternoon and evening to the pursuit of pleasure, in excursions, promenades, operas, balls, and theatres.

To come to details : on turning to my note-book, I find the following statistics of Sunday, 28th February, 1864. These I had carefully gathered, that there might be no mistake as to the facts of the case. To have a fair, average view of matters, I took, as will be observed,

sections of different streets, all in the neighbourhood of our boarding-house. Of the shops there were—

Open.	Shut.	
15	4	in the Rue de la Madeleine.
14	5	„ Rue du Faubourg St Honoré.
93	21	„ Rue St. Honoré.
13	1	„ Rue des Pyramides.
57	7	„ Rue de Rivoli.
15	0	„ Passage.
—	—	
207	38	

This Table shows only **one shop shut out of every six**. Let my readers fancy that as they pass on their way to the house of God, they see almost all the shops in their native town or village standing open, with men and women buying and selling, and they have an idea of the desecration of the Lord's day in Paris. The tide and toil of business does **not** cease in many cases till night brings rest to its weary slaves. On returning from evening service, I have **seen** them still behind the counter, chained to the oar; and in not a few instances playing cards when business was slack in the shop. A visit to Paris would convince the working classes that those are their worst friends who attempt to divest the first day of the week of that holiness which, as all experience proves, affords the only security for rest and repose to the sons of toil. These painful scenes recalled the sagacity, as well as humanity and patriotism, expressed by Adam Smith in his advice to one who, living to hold sounder views, had, in his early days, written an **attack on the observance of the Lord's day**, as practised

in our country. The celebrated author of the "Wealth of Nations" was himself no Christian. He did not believe in the binding obligation of the fourth Commandment; nor can he be said to have believed in the Bible itself. Yet, when his friend had finished reading the manuscript, Adam Smith advised him to commit it to the flames. A patriotic, though not a pious man, he said that since the common idea of the sacred nature of that day secured to the working classes, week by week, a period of repose and rest, the Sunday, even as a civil institution, was an invaluable blessing.

The picture of a Parisian Sunday would be imperfect unless we conveyed to our readers some idea of the manner in which pleasure, as well as business, is pursued on that sacred day. I might tell how, on passing through the Champs Élysées, we found its broad and beautiful walks crowded with thousands, dressed out in the gayest style, coquetting, laughing, and in many ways enjoying themselves with all the gaiety and sprightliness of the French character. There were men playing billiards; while whirligigs and toys, set out for sale, were ministering to the merriment and pleasure of children. Save, indeed, for the rows of brilliant equipages which bore the beauty and fashion of Paris along the broad avenues, the scene presented very much of the aspect of a gay country fair. But my note-book, with its statistics, will, better than anything else, lift the curtain to show my readers what awaits our country if the door is once opened for ordinary amusements and pleasures on the Lord's day. On the Sunday already referred to, the 28th February,

here are the enjoyments and relaxation which Paris offers to its population as a substitute for what the French, and those who have become inoculated with their tastes, call the dulness of British Sabbaths.

At the Opéra.—“The Huguenots,” in five acts.

„ Théâtre-Français.—“Une Chaîne,” a Comedy in five acts;
and “The Young Husband,” a Comedy in three acts.

„ Opéra-Comique.—“The Black Domino.”

„ Odéon.—Representations of “The Relays and the Will.”

„ Gymnase.—“Mont Joye,” a Comedy in five acts.

„ Théâtre-Italien.—“Rigoletto,” an Opera in four acts.

„ Théâtre-Lyrique.—“Faust,” an Opera in five acts.

„ Palais-Royal.—“La Gaunotte.”

„ Porte St.-Martin.—“Faustine.”

„ Gaîté.—“The House of the Bagnio Keeper.”

„ Théâtre du Châtelet.—“The Shipwreck of the *Medusa*.”

„ Théâtre des Jeunes Artistes.—“Galatée.”

„ Variétés.—“Le Petit de la Rue Ponceau,” a Comedy in two acts, lively and very amusing; preceded by “The Sister of Jocrice,” and followed by “A Trooper who follows the Nurserymaids.”

Such is a Parisian Sunday!

The tide, however, is on the turn. Comparatively few as are the shops shut on the Lord's day, the number is, I am assured, greater than it was twenty or thirty years ago. Some no doubt are closed for merely secular objects; but we have reason to know that others are shut from a growing regard to the Lord's day; and it was with the pleasures of hope that, here and there, we read this notice, painted in large characters on the closed shutters, *Fermé le Dimanche et les Fêtes*. Nor are higher ideas of the sacredness of Sunday confined to Protestants. I saw and hailed with delight signs, though few and far

between, of sounder views even among the Roman Catholics. Let me illustrate this by an example taken from the church of St. Joseph in the Popish town of Quimper. Near by the high altar we found an artificial mount which rose five feet high, and was tastefully constructed of beautiful green moss. It was topped by a graceful form of the Virgin. Her head was circled by a golden glory, and wore a glittering crown with three stars. Before the Mother of Jesus stood the figures of two Breton children—a boy and girl, over whom she was bending with a look of tender kindness. The group was pretty and picturesque; but the remarkable thing was the inscription on the pedestal which supported the figures—the instruction which the Virgin was represented as giving to the children. Here it is:—

“Le Blasphème et la Profanation du Dimanche voilà ce qui excite le plus la colère de mon Fils.”

Anglicé—

“The Blasphemy and Profanation of Sunday is that which most excites the anger of my Son.”

Perhaps the most satisfactory proof of a growing regard for a better observance of the Lord's day, lies in the fact which I learned in Paris, that this great subject, some years ago, brought Protestants and Papists together; that, though it did not succeed, an attempt was made at united action on this matter. It is due to the French authorities to add, that although in reviews of troops and many things else the “leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed,” the government has shown itself favourable to such attempts.

It has issued decree on decree against any work being done on the Lord's day in its dockyards and other places, for which there was no clear and strong necessity. No doubt these have been often evaded; still it is well for the country and creditable to the ruling powers, that the Government has raised its voice in favour of what is as consonant to the word of God as to the best interests of all classes of the community. However slowly it comes creeping in, the tide has certainly turned. A better day is dawning over France. And, revering the memory of her distinguished martyrs, admiring the genius and talents of her people, and seeing much in them to love and esteem, we cannot but hail with pleasure the coming time when this great nation, listening to the counsel, will enjoy the blessing of these words: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth: the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Our hope for France lies not in the Church of Rome, but in what deserves some remarks, namely, *The Progress of Protestantism*.

The most fatal day for France was not Cressy, nor Pavia, nor Waterloo, but that which saw Henry IV. abandon his faith and become a Papist for the possession of Paris. Since then it has gone ill with morals,

and truth, and religion. But I have the best grounds for believing that Protestantism is now making decided progress among her intellectual classes, and in those parts of the country which form centres of influence. It is otherwise indeed in rural districts, and wherever the Protestant ministers hold rationalistic errors. I heard, for example, of a congregation of Protestants which under such a ministry has dwindled down, within the last twenty years, from three thousand to six hundred souls ; and of another which within the same time has been reduced from six hundred to fifty. No wonder ! Under the ministry of men who do not preach the saving doctrines of the Bible, nor even believe in its inspiration, piety dies ; and must die.

Again, where a Roman Catholic in France is to be married to a Protestant, the priest usually refuses to celebrate the marriage according to the form of his Church, except on condition that the children (if any) shall be reared in her faith ; and these terms are usually agreed to by the party, who, though a Protestant in name, is in fact, like his pastor, indifferent to religion. The consequence is inevitable—such cold and feeble Protestantism must go down in the struggle with Popery. There is another cause to account for the diminution of Protestantism in the provinces and rural districts. The *communes*, or parishes, of France number 38,000 ; and throughout these, the Protestants have only 1500 places of worship and 1000 schools. In many instances, therefore, the latter have to seek education for their children in Roman Catholic schools ; and the children being thus

brought at an early and impressible age under the influence of Popery, are prepared afterwards to fall into her snares and lapse into the Church of Rome. Besides, when a Protestant removes from the place of his birth, since there are only 1500 places of worship belonging to the Reformed Church in the 38,000 *communes* of France, there are more than twenty chances to one against his finding in the place to which he has gone any church of his own and his fathers' faith. He is removed from his family; and, surrounded by an entirely Roman Catholic population, he becomes connected with them by marriage or otherwise. Struggling for a-while against adverse circumstances, he is at length borne along by the current, and becomes absorbed in the mass of Popery among which he lives and moves, and has his being—a result that, though lamentable, is certainly not wonderful. To such an extent, indeed, do these causes operate on the relative proportions of Roman Catholics and Protestants in France, that the gains which Protestantism makes by the conversion of Papists are more than counterbalanced by the losses it suffers in this way. Still, the state of matters is not so sad and disheartening as might be supposed. Under such apparently unfavourable circumstances the truth is making progress. The Protestant Church, though meanwhile not gaining in point of numbers, is gaining in real life and power. Making many conversions from among the Roman Catholic population, it finds in every one won over to its ranks by the force of truth, an advocate and adherent worth a dozen such as it loses through indifference to religion.

The progress of Protestantism in the way of conversion of Papists is quite remarkable in some, especially the larger, towns of France. Take, for example, Lyons and Paris—cities which I select, because I had my information concerning them from persons thoroughly acquainted with the facts. In Lyons, where the mass of the people are intensely Papistical, there was, in 1836, one National Reformed Church, and only one small congregation of Evangelical Protestants. The latter, a little flock, found themselves amply accommodated in a small room. After twenty years, or so—the statistics which my informant gave me applying to 1855—the congregation which a little room once contained, had grown into a church of 1200 souls. This remarkable increase was due mainly to conversions. Nor is that all. Besides this large congregation and that of the National Reformed Church, there are now five other Protestant chapels in Lyons, where the Truth, as it is in Jesus, is faithfully preached. Such is the progress which Protestantism has made, and is making, in that hotbed of Popery. Now as to Paris, its rate of progress there has been hardly less remarkable. In 1827, when I first knew that gay capital, there were, including French, English, and German congregations, not more than five or six Protestant churches; but now, in 1864, there are thirty-five at least; an enormous increase compared with that of the population. Between the two periods, the population has increased little more than twofold, but the Protestant churches have increased not less than sixfold. This gain has been the conquest of Truth over Error; the increased

number of Protestants being due chiefly to conversions from Popery. For example, I was informed by some who knew the congregation well, that in a crowded French church where I worshipped one Sunday, nearly one half of the audience were converts—having been born and brought up Roman Catholics. Such, also, was the history of nearly three-fourths of those with whom I worshipped in another church.

These are promising and remarkable results. How were they produced? Having to deal with Popery at home, it were instructive as well as interesting to know by what agency, God blessing the means, so signal a triumph has been achieved—what are the weapons with which Truth has gone down into the battle-field, and won the day—what lessons British Protestants may learn from those who have fought the good fight so well in France. Now, I met with some who felt the deepest interest and had taken an active part in the work. They stated that controversy which, though valuable in its own time and place, is apt to become acrid and personal, had not been the means of their success. The agents employed were Christian men, with love in their hearts, kindness on their lips, and courtesy in their manners, who visited the homes of the people, some as colporteurs, others as city missionaries and regularly ordained ministers of the Gospel; and the instruments with which they wrought were tracts, the Holy Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, privately but widely circulated. Popery in Paris has yielded more to sapping and mining than to any fierce and open assaults, preceded by a blare of trumpets. The

time may come for open assault ; but, as in ordinary war, that assault is most likely to be successful which is preceded by long and quiet and patient labours.

I was not only particular in my inquiries on this subject, but had myself an opportunity of seeing how the evangelists and agents of the Reformed Faith go to work. I accompanied one of the city missionaries, and spent some hours with him in visiting his district. On our way he informed me that he and his fellow-labourers never thrust themselves on the people. They contrived, in the first instance, to gain admission to their homes by means of some family in whose house they had already obtained a footing. Madame Chaplain, for example, is a *blanchisseuse* ; this honest washerwoman introduces the missionary to Jacques Laval, a *charbonnier*, from whom she buys wood and charcoal ; and he in his turn introduces our evangelist to the *concierge*, where Widow Leufroy sits portress by the gate of the court which, after the Paris fashion, contains the homes of a dozen families. On reaching the field of the good man's labours, which was inhabited chiefly by the working and humbler classes, we commenced the work of visitation ; and I could not but admire the skill with which he, a thoroughly devout but also very shrewd man, adapted himself to the circumstances and character of those with whom he had to deal. In one case, the man and his wife were inquirers after the truth. They had lost all faith in Popery. But, though usually going to the Reformed Church, they had not yet embraced Protestantism. In another, the woman, whom we found taking her mid-day meal of bread and

apples, was still a Roman Catholic ; but the kind, lively, chatty body, full of gesticulation and quick to understand, had a Bible on her table, and was ready to hear the truth. In another still, not to multiply instances, we enjoyed the pleasure of meeting a singularly happy and devout Christian. Born and bred in the Church of Rome, he had come out of her and brought not a rag of the graveclothes with him. Providing things honest in the sight of all men, he was busy at his trade as we entered ; but so soon as he recognised the missionary, whom he received very warmly, he laid aside his work. He entered eagerly into conversation on the things of "the kingdom ;" and his fine intelligent countenance "shone" as he spoke of Jesus, and expatiated on the happiness which he had enjoyed since he was brought to an experimental knowledge of the truth.

Such are the means which the Protestants of France have employed with remarkable success against their two great antagonists, Popery and Infidelity. With the readiness which their countrymen show to rival us in the arts of peace or the instruments of war, they have lately taken a lesson from British Christians, and summoned Bible Women, as they are called, to their help. The success of these agents has been as remarkable in Paris as in our own great cities—perhaps even more so. They have found access to quarters which had proved quite inaccessible to the ordinary missionaries. I refer to the *blanchisseuses*, or washerwomen of Paris. These are a very numerous class ; they have many large establishments scattered over the city ; they are to be seen by hundreds

busy in covered boats, which lie moored along the quays of the Seine; they form, after a fashion, a regular sisterhood, having a fête-day of their own, on which, gaily dressed, and abandoning themselves to idleness and mirth, they parade the streets of Paris in imposing and long procession. Including a proportion of decent and respectable persons, they are, as a class, bold, coarse, daring, and dissolute. The missionaries attempted to make a lodgment for the Gospel among them; but they were soon put *hors de combat*, and were glad to escape from their ribald tongues—if not sharp claws. Yet, as a gentle hand will open a lock which refuses to yield to masculine strength and force, these women have succeeded in doing what baffled the missionaries. They have made good their access to the *blanchisseuses*; and such success has crowned their labors, that one of them was found to have sold more Bibles in one month among the washerwomen than had been disposed of by all the other missionaries during the same period throughout all the other quarters of Paris.

These facts prove what every lover of truth and liberty will rejoice in; this, namely, that the Protestantism of France is not only not dead, but no longer sleepeth. There is still much of Rationalism and semi-infidelity among its ministers and adherents; but the tide which has turned is flowing full and strong in the direction of a real and lively Christianity. The “*Église Indépendante*,” at the head of which Frederic Monod stood—a man of mark in all the Christian world for his zeal, his abundant labors, and self-denying piety—is constantly

adding to its churches and adherents. The National Reformed Church also, which is connected with the State that endows Papists, Protestants, and Jews alike, and of which Adolph Monod, Frederic's devout and eloquent brother, was a distinguished ornament and minister, is steadily returning to the faith of her famous founders—of men whom France, at the bidding of Popery, hunted from her borders, or murdered in her streets. A remarkable proof of this occurred while we were in Paris, which is well worth mentioning.

The "Temple of L'Oratoire," the principal edifice of the National Reformed Church in Paris, had had for one of its preachers the son of its oldest minister. He, *Coquerel fils*, as he is called, is, as I learned from some who know him intimately, a very amiable man. All Paris, or rather France, knows that he is a most eloquent man. Such indeed are his powers and fame, that he was in constant request as a preacher of public sermons. Papists and Protestants flocked to the church where he was advertised to preach. None gathered such crowds of men, or collections of money. Well, when we were in Paris the time arrived when the question had to be settled, whether his engagement as a preacher in "L'Oratoire" should or should not be renewed. The decision was in the hands of the *Consistoire*—an ecclesiastical Court, corresponding to a Scotch Presbytery; its members being the ministers and lay representatives of the congregations in and around Paris which belong to the National Reformed Church. The Court met; the matter was discussed; and *Coquerel fils*, beloved by all

who knew him and admired by *tout le monde*, was rejected. The votes of the majority refused him. And why? Because he had publicly lauded Renan, and avowed Rationalistic opinions. The bold position which the Consistory took, and which they continue to maintain against a storm of abuse from all the infidel and semi-infidel newspapers of Paris, is a most palpable and gratifying evidence of the revival of pure religion and vital godliness in the National Reformed Church. An omen for good, it opens up a great and glorious future, when France shall go forth to the emancipation of her people from Popery and Infidelity "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Here the trumpet has uttered no uncertain sound. The Church has spoken out; and it cannot fail to gladden the hearts of thousands to hear her voice sounding so loud and clear in the words of Guizot (one of the members of the *Consistoire*), the great statesman, historian, and philosopher. The following quotation from his speech I extract from the *Communication du Conseil Presbytéral aux Fidèles sur le non-renouvellement de la suffragance de M. le Pasteur Athanase Coquerel fils*. "In a sermon," said Guizot, "upon the unity of the Church, Monsieur Coquerel fils calls the Socinians his Christian brothers. A Church into which the Socinians are admitted as brothers cannot be a Christian Church. The Socinians, like all others, are free to unite together. Most unjustly are men getting up a cry of the Inquisition and the times of persecution. The times are happily changed: each one is free to unite with those who share his opinions.

We do not interfere with the liberty of individuals ; but they have no right to ask us to be indifferent in the face of manifestations—it may be in preaching, it may be otherwise—against what we regard as the very foundations of Christianity. There is a stream flowing against the Christian faith, and we ought carefully to guard against anything which could swell its waters. I myself attach a great importance to religious feelings, but I regard dogmas as their source. It is from a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, his incarnation and redemption, that Christian feelings spring. Dogmas are their foundation. We wish to drive away none. Every one can abide in the Church ; but can we give her as leaders those who show themselves so indifferent to doctrines, those who reject what we regard as the very foundation of the faith ?”

What a pleasing thing it is to see one of the greatest of living men come forward to proclaim the precious old faith ! All honour to Guizot for throwing himself into the battle against Renans, Coquerels, and Colensos, and confronting the whole array of “advanced thinkers” as they are now called,—“free thinkers” as they once were called.

SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE.

I.—DR. CHALMERS AND THE COWGATE.



EDINBURGH stands on three hills, or long, lofty, parallel ridges. On the west, her castle, once formidable with its frowning batteries, crowns the great mass of rock which terminates precipitately the central ridge; on the east rise Salisbury Crags, with their mural crown and the lion's head of Arthur's Seat towering over them; while the Calton Hill stands in the heart of the living city, broken with cliffs, enamelled with golden furze, feathered with trees, and studded with monuments to the mighty dead—features these to which Edinburgh owes a locality unrivalled for its picturesque effects. The passenger may thread the streets of London for hours and miles, nor see else on either hand but lines of brick houses, and overhead a ribbon of dirty blue; but there are few streets in “the grey capital of the north” where the eye, weary of stone houses and dusty pavements, is not regaled with pleasant glimpses of crags, or green hills, or the great blue sea. No one who has stood on the hoary battlements of the castle and

looked down on the scene spread out before him, the singular combination of art and nature, of the sublime and beautiful, of bold architecture and hanging gardens, of highland ruggedness and lowland sweetness—the frame of this picture, a broad arm of the sea, studded with gems of islands, gleaming with white sails, and backed by a range of hills—no one who has seen this but will excuse Scotchmen for thinking that their lines have fallen to them in pleasant places, or applying to their old capital, words which glorified an older and holier city :—

Mount Zion stands most beautiful,
The joy of all the land.

In consequence of its peculiar as well as picturesque locality, Edinburgh is traversed from west to east by two great valleys. That lying on the north of the central hilly ridge was a loch some hundred years ago. Her defence in unquiet times, it is now her ornament ; and more than an ornament—its bed, with a patriotic and Christian regard to the welfare of the working classes, being turned into beautiful gardens, where workmen relax from their toils and inhale draughts of health. The corresponding valley to the south had also once been a loch, a marsh at least ; but long centuries ago, before the mournful field of Flodden, the population, outgrowing the limits of the old walls, poured over into this valley ; and it was turned into an open suburb, and peopled by princes and the nobles of the land. It went, and still goes, by the name of the Cowgate. The same in name, how different now its aspect and people ! Now-a-days,

two bridges connect the parts of the city which stand on the southern ridge, with the High Street on the central one ; each, as they bestride the valley, forming a level roadway flanked by lines of houses, save where the middle arch spans the Cowgate. It was there, where one looks down on the street below, and on the foul crowded closes that stretch, like ribs, down into the Cowgate, I stood on a gloomy day in the fall of the year. The streets were a puddle ; the heavy air, loaded with smoke, was thick and murky ; right below lay the narrow street of dingy tenements, whose toppling chimneys and patched and battered roofs were apt emblems of the fortunes of most of its tenants. Of these, some were lying over the sills of windows innocent of glass, or stuffed with old hats and dirty rags ; others, coarse-looking women with squalid children in their arms or at their feet, stood in groups at the close-mouths—here with empty laughter, chaffing any passing acquaintance—there screaming each other down in a drunken brawl, or standing sullen and silent, with hunger and ill-usage in their saddened looks. A brewer's cart, threatening to crush beneath its ponderous wheels the ragged urchins who had no other playground, rumbled over the causeway—drowning the quavering voice of one whose drooping head and scanty dress were ill in harmony with song, but not drowning the shrill pipe of an Irish girl, who thumped the back of an unlucky donkey and cried her herrings at “three a penny.” So looked the parish I had come to cultivate : and while contrasting the scene below with pleasant recollections of a parish I had just left—its

singing larks, daisied pastures, hedges of hoary thorn, fragrant bean-fields and smiling gardens, decent peasants, stalwart lads and blooming lasses, and the grand blue sea rolling its lines of snowy breakers on the shore—my rather sad and sombre ruminations were suddenly checked. A hand was laid on my shoulder. I turned round, to find Dr. Chalmers at my elbow.

Courted by the great, Chalmers' sympathies were with the masses. Their oppression roused him like a lion; their neglect stirred his indignation; their sufferings touched his soul with such tender pity that the horrors of the Irish and Highland famines were like to break his heart. He loved mankind. Cherishing a profound veneration for all things ancient,—monarchy, the aristocracy, seats of learning such as Oxford, ecclesiastical establishments hoar with years, and associated with the memory of champions who went out from their gates to meet the infidel and do battle for the Faith,—he had no sympathy with such as look down on the lower classes. *Odi profanum vulgus* was not his motto. His aspirations were not to drag the upper classes down to the level of the lower, but to improve the economic, educational, moral, and religious condition of the lowest stratum of society; and so, as when the base of a pyramid is raised, to raise all the courses of the superstructure up to royalty—sitting high and lone on the throne. This great and good man knew that I had accepted an Edinburgh charge mainly for the purpose of trying what the parochial or territorial system, fairly wrought, could do toward Christianising the heathendom beneath our feet, and restoring the denizens

of the Cowgate and its closes to sober, decent, and church-going habits. City missionaries laboured in this enterprise. But though no man looked more benignly on their labours than Dr. Chalmers, he held that a solitary missionary, without church, school, or coadjutors, could do little more than nurse up one plant of grace here and another there, pick one jewel out of this dust-heap and another out of that. To change the face of a district required, in his opinion, a more extensive and efficient system of cultivation—a school for children ; a church with its door open to the poorest of the inhabitants ; and a large staff of zealous men and women—each with their own section of families to visit, and all working in harmony, like bees in a hive, under the direction of the minister, their captain, bishop, or superintendent. Emigrants know to their cost, that it requires a much greater outlay of money and labour to clear the forest, root out stumps, trench the soil, sink drains, and raise fences—in short, bring waste land under cultivation, than to keep it cultivated ; in other words, to make a farm than maintain one. This is equally true of moral as of natural husbandry. So to bring in what Dr. Chalmers, borrowing an expression from old Scotch agriculture, called the *outfield*, he considered it indispensable to have, besides a church and school with their minister and teacher, a territory manageable in point of population, and a large staff of Christian agents, each charged with the care of some dozen or half-dozen families, and the duty of paying them frequent and systematic visits. Thus only can we elevate the habits and

improve the homes of such people ; win the children to school, and themselves to church ; and so relieve their temporal wants as to teach them to stand on their own feet, instead of leaning on others.

Public-houses opened in our streets will get customers without any other agency than men's appetites. To brutalise men with whisky, it is enough to set before them "an open door." An open door will not secure the good sought by schools and churches. These are least appreciated where they are most needed. Hence the need of a staff of earnest men and women to work in the territory, each having a sphere of families so small that visits may be paid to them at least once a week without encroaching on the time which the cares of the visitor's family or business require. To build churches and schools merely, is to offer stones in place of bread. Living, loving Christian agents must, Elijah like, take the dead, as it were, into their arms that they may be brought to life—an element of success this which I trust will be brought into vigorous play by the Bishop of London and those Churchmen, by Mr. Morley and those Nonconformists, who are making such praiseworthy efforts to overtake the spiritual destitution of the metropolis. The worth and wealth and kindness of Christian congregations are thus brought to fertilise the barren spots of the land. So wrought, the success of the territorial system in Edinburgh has been remarkable—so remarkable, indeed, as to prove that if every Christian congregation in our large towns, instead of looking only at its own things, would, with the heart of the good Samaritan, look at the

things of others, and charge itself with the duty of Christianising some neglected district, we should see the desert in a few years blossoming like the rose. So it blossomed once under the parochial system. But it had fallen into utter decay; partly through the negligence of the clergy, and partly through the exaction of such exorbitant seat-rents as set up a popular minister to the hammer, and banished the working-classes from the parish church. Meanwhile, as I have already remarked, Dr. Chalmers knew that I had come, God helping me, to restore it—"to build the old waste places; raise up the foundations of many generations; and be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Hopeful of success, he surveyed the scene beneath us, and his eye, which often wore a dreamy stare, kindled at the prospect of seeing that wilderness become an Eden, these foul haunts of darkness, drunkenness, and disease, changed into "dwellings of the righteous where is heard the voice of melody." Contemplating the scene for a little in silence, all at once, with his broad Luther-like face glowing with enthusiasm, he waved his arm to exclaim, "A beautiful field, sir; a very fine field of operation."

I needed his enthusiasm to encourage me. The contrast, both moral and physical, between my present and former sphere was such as, without God's help, to appal the stoutest heart. My country parish had no Papists, and I had come to one that swarmed with them; my country parish had only one public-house, and I had come to one where tippling abounded, and the owners of dram-shops grew like toad-stools on the public ruin;

with one thousand inhabitants my country parish had but one man who could not read, and I had come to one with hundreds who did not know a letter; my country parish was not disgraced by one drunken woman, and I had come to one where women drank and scores of mothers starved their infants to feed their vices; my country parish might show a darned but not a ragged coat, and I had come to one of loop-holed poverty, where backs were hung with rags, and the naked, red, cracked, ulcered feet of little shivering creatures trode the icy streets; in my country parish there was but one person who did not attend the house of God, and I had come to one where only five of the first one hundred and fifty I visited ever entered either church or chapel; my old country parish had not a house without at least one Bible, and I had come to one where many families had neither a Bible on the shelf nor a bedstead on the floor. Inside and outside, the roll might be written with "Lamentation, mourning, and woe."

In this field I spent much of the first five or six years of my ministry in Edinburgh. And though it was a hard but profitable training for future spheres of usefulness, the limbs were often weary and the heart sad, and in close pent-up rooms where typhus mowed down its victims, as grass falls to the scythe, life itself was not seldom exposed to danger. In the seeming hopelessness of accomplishing much permanent good, one was often sent to the throne of grace, crying, "Vain is the help of man! Arise, O Lord, and plead the cause that is thine own!" And yet I and my coadjutors were not without

such a measure of success as warranted the hope of accomplishing a great work, and proving, through patience, pains, and prayer, the truth of these noble words :—

We have not wings, we cannot soar :
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert air,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept,
Were not attained by sudden flight ;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies.

I propose in a series of sketches to introduce my readers to the Cowgate and its neighbourhood. In attempting this I labour under the disadvantage of drawing on impressions more or less defaced by the constant tread of a crowded life ; still I trust they may prove useful—awakening Christian sympathy, and stimulating to greater efforts on behalf of many who have been as much sinned against as sinning. Before I bring the actors on

the stage, I will attempt in my next paper some further account of the scenes amid which they moved. They are dingy and forbidding. On their mouldering tenements, with a hand which changes all things but God's blessed word, Time has written "Ichabod," the glory is departed : yet sacred memories and stirring associations cling to their old walls, like the green glossy mantle with which ivy clothes a crumbling ruin.

SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE.

II.—OLD HOUSES AND INSCRIPTIONS.



ALEXANDER ALESSE, a canon of St. Andrew's and a reformer before the Reformation, who went abroad in 1532 to escape persecution at the hands of the Romish clergy, writes of the Cowgate, or Via Vaccarum, as he calls it—*In qua habitant patricii et senatores urbis et in qua sunt principum regni palatia, ubi nihil est humile aut rusticum, sed omnia magnifica.* In our age—such in God's good providence has been the progress of society—comforts fall to the share of tradesmen which nobles did not enjoy in the days of this worthy canon. His ideas of magnificence must, therefore, have been different from ours—a circumstance to which many, as they look down on the Cowgate, might attribute the glowing terms in which he describes it as all magnificent, and the fit abode of nobles. Yet, like the hope of immortality, our sense of right and wrong, the silent homage which vice pays to virtue, and those other vestiges of our original innocence which adorn the ruins of humanity, not a few memorials

of sumptuous grandeur linger about these smoke-be-grimed, toppling tenements. Where windows were patched, and rooms were bare walls, and floors were crusted with dirt, and ragged children bore evidence of want in their sallow colour and wasted forms, I have seen vestiges of former splendour—in bits of highly ornate ceilings, massive mahogany balustrades and marble mantelpieces, a painted face looking out from the wall through the dirty whitewash that concealed the rest of the picture. Some one has said, all memoirs are sad. These were; calling up days when rank and beauty crowded those apartments, and their floors shook to dances, and their walls were hung with tapestry embroidered by fair ladies' fingers, and wine sparkled in golden cups, and luxury spread her board.

For example: I remember being called to the dying bed of the wife of an old man. He had seen better days. Though his neighbours were vulgar, his own manners were refined; his dress, though threadbare, was always well brushed; his long locks, which were as white as snow, were also as clean as it; the misfortunes which had saddened his countenance had not soured his temper. It was kept sweet, and his spirit gentle and submissive, by the grace of God. Sober among drunkards, decent among the depraved, and among hundreds who paid no respect whatever to religion, devout and regular in his attendance on public worship, he was what, in a sense, all Christians may and should be—a light shining in a dark place. His wife—and hers was no singular case—had been a drunkard; with such a

craving for the bottle that to keep his Sunday dress from going, as all things else had gone, for whisky, he had to commit it to the custody of a kind neighbour. On reaching his home the scene which presented itself was melancholy to the last degree. The spacious apartment contained hardly a stick of furniture; the walls were foul with dust and hung with cobwebs; the air was close and stifling; in one corner was a heap of straw, on which, without bed or other covering than her ragged body-clothes, lay his wife—drunk and dying—insensible to anything I could tell of Him who pities the worst of sinners, and can save at the uttermost. I was haunted with dreadful forebodings. Yet while standing by one who, with the death-rattle in her throat, was hurrying away, drunk, to judgment, I could not help noticing that the handful of cinders on the hearth was smouldering beneath a shattered mantelpiece of marble, and that beautifully-modelled figures of the Seasons were looking down from the ceiling on this shocking spectacle. *Sic transit gloria mundi*—the fashion of this world passeth away.

Musty charters and old history confirm the description of the Canon of St. Andrews. It was in this district, proverbial now for meanness, that a splendid banquet was given to the Danish nobles and ambassadors in 1590, “at the request,” says the old chronicle, “of the Kingis Majestie & for honour of the toun.” Here royalty itself occasionally lodged. Here Argyll, Mar, Bothwell, and other nobles, had their town mansions. Here stood the palace of that Archbishop of Glasgow whose scheming

and turbulent life tempted the fate that closed it,—when they hanged him at Stirling dressed out in full canonicals. A story related of this churchman is instructive, as showing from what kind of clergy the Reformation delivered our country. Gawin Douglas, the poet-Bishop of Dunkeld, had gone to request him to mediate between the Earl of Angus and the Earl of Arran. Though the latter, with his faction, was at the time within the palace, preparing for an immediate onslaught upon Angus and his followers; and though, with the view of taking part in the bloody fray, the Archbishop had put on a suit of armour, which he concealed under his rochet, he replied, “Upon my conscience, my lord, I know nothing of the matter.” To give emphasis to his words, after the manner of an orator, he struck his hand upon his breast. The iron corselet rattled beneath the rochet. It betrayed the liar; giving Douglas, as he bowed and retired, an opportunity of making this happy retort: “My lord,” said he, using in *clatters* a Scotch word which means to tell tales, “My lord, your conscience clatters.”

But in the contrast between its ungodliness and former piety, my parish presented a contrast still more painful than that between its meanness and ancient splendour. It presented many, and not a few appalling, cases of extreme misery. I have seen the dying lying all but naked, and had to buy blankets to cover them; the dead lying unburied, and had to buy a shell to coffin them; whole families ravening for food, and had to buy bread to feed them. Take this example as a case in point—one of the many which illustrate the saying, that one

half of the world does not know how the other half live ; and which, often meeting the City Missionary, make his duties in some respects more trying than his who preaches the gospel to pagans with the virtues of savage, and few of the vices of civilised, life. The scene lay either in the Horse Wynd, where the Lady Galloway lived, about a century ago, who was wont to order out her carriage to pay a visit to some titled neighbour a few doors off ; or in the College Wynd, up whose steep ascent some three hundred years ago Franciscans and Dominicans, priests and prelates, in long procession clomb with crozier and crucifix to the church of St. Mary's-in-the-Fields. In a bare room in one or other of these narrow streets I found a mother with four or five children. She looked utterly woe-begone ; and showed the hanging lip and watery eye they get who drink "to forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more." A poor, withering, skeleton infant lay in her arms, with its sick head laid wearily on her naked shoulder ; the others stood around, staring at me out of their hollow eyes—theirs the saddened look of children who had never had a plaything in their hands, nor a smile on their faces. Disturbed, while speaking to her, by the wail and low mutterings of the creature on her bosom, I asked, What ails it—what is it saying ? Whereupon the mother turned on it a look of unutterable tenderness, and bursting into tears, replied, It is crying for bread—and I have none ! They had not broken their fast that day. They were starving. I had read in the Bible, but had never seen a case before, of children who cried for bread and their mother had none

to give them. Greatly shocked at the sight, I instantly, as the readiest way of supplying their wants, got in a loaf; and it was a feast to see the joy that lighted up their eyes at the sight of bread, and the eagerness with which each fell on his share—devouring it ravenously.

Such as saw in these people those for whom Christ died, and knew that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, would have found a still greater want. It was more common to find families without Bibles than with them. Such was the utterly irreligious state into which they had sunk, that of the first 150 persons I visited not more than five, including Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, were in the habit of attending any place of worship—the more shame to those who did, and had left them to perish in their sins. I remember a whole day spent in going from house to house, or rather from room to room, each usually housing one and sometimes two families, and being reminded, by the only Bible I saw, of these words of Whitefield; “I could write Damnation,” said the bold orator, “in the dust which covers your Bibles!” The room was occupied by a “cinder woman,” as in Edinburgh they call those weird-looking creatures who prowl about the streets, late at night or at early morn, raking among the dust-heaps for cinders which they sell, for potatoes and bits of meat which they eat—with the chance of occasionally lighting on a gold ring or silver spoon. I found her literally sitting “in dust and ashes;” floor, bed, table, chairs, all else, coated grey with them. She might have been fasting, but it

was not from sin ; for on rising to receive me when I introduced myself as the minister of the parish, she had great difficulty to keep her equilibrium. Though remembering the proverb about casting pearls, I could not but hint at her habits. This at once set her up. She declared herself to be a very religious woman ; and, seeing me making for the door, insisted on my remaining to be convinced of that. Staggering across the room, she mounted a chair, from which I every moment expected to see her tumble headlong on the floor, to thrust her arm to the back of a cupboard, and drag out a Bible. This she shook in my face and flourished over my head, sending out a cloud of dust from its rustling leaves. This Bible, in the hands of a drunken virago, was the only one I had seen that day ; and was it not sad to think that to any part of a city full of churches these words could be so justly applied, “ Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the people ? ”

It was not always so there. These houses present vestiges of piety more interesting still than the melancholy relics of their old splendour ; and could “ the stone out of the wall and the beam out of the timber ” speak, I can fancy them saying, “ How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed ! ” To say nothing of the feelings of a devout Roman Catholic, as (in a district where the Papists were such only in name) he read these words carved in stone—

“ AVE MARIA, PLENA GRATIA, DOMINUS TECUM,”

it was painful for me to contrast the nominal Protestants

there with those who built these houses, and who appear, by the inscriptions carved on lintels of doors and windows, to have consecrated the very stone and lime to God. We read on one, "BE MERCIFUL TO ME, O GOD!" On another, "MY TRUST IS IN THE LORD." And a third raises this song of praise, "O MAGNIFIE THE LORD WITH ME, AND LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER!" Ready to sink under the burden and heat of the day, I have felt revived on reading one of those blessed old texts: it was like coming on a spring that welled up beside a clump of palm-trees amid the desert's burning sands.

We hope the world is growing better; and that it is with the progress of society as yonder where, though each wave as it breaks on the beach rolls back to the sea, each, the billow of a flowing tide, breaks in front of that which preceded it. There is as much, if not more true religion in our age than in any bygone days. Still, though out of fashion, we like the old practice whereby, without intending to parade their piety, our fathers, by these Scripture texts, seemed to consecrate their houses; and intimated that with the parent for high-priest, prayer and thanksgiving for the sacrifices, and the family for worshippers, their dwellings should be holy temples to the Lord. A beautiful custom, it still survives in some parts of the Continent, and nowhere more than in a valley of Switzerland, which, following the course of the Visp as it rushes foaming from the glaciers of Monte Rosa, is inhabited by an exclusively Roman Catholic, but very sober, honest, devout, primitive race of people. In these quaint old hamlets, which stand amid flowery

pastures at the feet of stupendous, snow-crowned mountains, I was often pleasantly reminded of the Cowgate and Edinburgh's ancient tenements. With that skill in wood-cutting for which they are famous, the Switzers had carved portions of Scripture on the great beams that supported their wooden ceilings, as well as on the fronts of their houses and the lintels of their doors. Perhaps in the dangers of their situation they found an aid to their devotion—whole villages there having been overwhelmed in a moment, and the church of St. Nicole, as I read on three tablets that stand above the rood screen, having been once destroyed by an earthquake, and twice beaten to the ground and buried beneath avalanches of snow. However that may be, why should texts of Holy Scripture be regarded as suitable to the tombs of the dead, but out of place on the dwellings of the living? I sympathise with the taste and admire the courage of the late Sir Andrew Agnew, who had this appropriate sentence carved over the grand doorway of his castle at Lochnaw, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it:" and who does not feel fresh reverence for the memory of the late Prince Consort, when, standing before the Royal Exchange of London, he learns that it was the Prince who suggested the grand and appropriate words that he reads on its architrave—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Nothing is more offensive, or suspicious, than an ostentatious parade of religion; but religion is never so healthy and true as when it gives its colour to all our acts, and, not confined to Sabbath-days, or churches, or

special services, descends like dews from the womb of the morning, to bathe everything in its spirit ; or, working like the great power-wheel of a manufactory, moves all the varied machinery of our daily life, while itself moved by influences from above.

The most interesting associations connected with the district which my old parish partly embraced, belong to two buildings that still stand, and were in the olden time the centres of religious movements that have left an enduring impress on Scotland, and sent their waves to break on shores far removed from the place where the commotion originated. One is the Tailors' Hall, over which stands an inscription more creditable certainly to the piety than the poetry of the craft :

TO THE GLORE OF GOD AND VERTEWE'S RENOWNE,
THE CUMPANIE OF TAILYEORS WITHIN THIS GOOD TOWNE
FOR MEETING OF THEIR CRAFT THIS HALL HAVE ERECTED
WITH TRUST IN GOD'S GOODNESS TO BE BLEST AND PROTECTED.

Here in a building afterwards degraded into a Play House, and now turned into a Brewery, began that movement which in the term, the "Times of the Covenant," gave a distinctive appellation to the age, and ushered in that long, weary, deadly strife out of which our liberties came, born of sufferings and baptised in blood. It was in this hall the Covenant was brought to light which in 1638 roused the country from Cape Wrath to Maiden Kirk, and placed Scotchmen, as the Highlanders say, shoulder to shoulder on the field—nobles and commoners, ministers and laymen, binding themselves to stand together, and to the death for their faith

and freedom. From this Hall, where the Earls of Loudon and Rothes had held conference with a large body of ministers gathered from stormy isle, highland glen, and lowland plain, the Covenant, signed by 300 of them and by many chiefs of the nobility, was carried to the churchyard of the Grey Friars to be read in the hearing of the people, and boldly signed in the face of day. There it was signed by a great and enthusiastic multitude—some of whom nobly redeemed on scaffolds and battle-fields the pledge they took, when, not satisfied with ink, they opened a vein in their arms to fill the pen with blood. These circumstances invest the Cowgate, notwithstanding its present degradation, with associations hallowed to the great mass of Scotchmen, and should redeem it from contempt in the eyes even of such as cannot in conscience approve either of the principles or of the proceedings of the Covenanters. These involve points on which good Christians will differ, and have a right to differ. But now, when the passions of both parties have had time to subside, it is generally admitted—David Hume himself admits it—that their struggles contributed to secure our civil and religious liberties, and that to the events which followed in their train, and culminated in the expulsion and permanent exclusion of a Popish family from the throne, our beloved country owes much of its prosperity, and happiness, and greatness.

There remains one other building in the Cowgate to be noticed in this sketch. The Magdalene Chapel, to which I refer, is interesting to ecclesiastical antiquaries

as possessing in the royal arms of Scotland encircled with a wreath of thistles, and those of Mary of Guise within a wreath of laurel, and those of the founder and foundress enclosed in ornamental borders, almost the only specimens which our country possesses of ancient glass-painting—an art which, with its dramatic scenes and “dim religious light,” appears rather more suited to the genius and sensuous forms of Popery than to Protestant worship. Truth passes to the Roman Catholic through his priest, as the light of heaven to our eye through a stained-glass window ; but Protestantism undertakes to pass it into the mind of man pure as it radiates from the Sun of Righteousness, uncoloured by the minister—like rays that permeate transparent glass. In employing this old art to ornament our churches, we should not forget that the power of a speaker over his audience depends in no small degree on his face, and the emotions it mirrors, being distinctly seen. Hence the footlights of the stage, to throw a glare on the actor’s form and features. The children of this world are wise in their generation. Theatres are built for good sight and good hearing. How many churches are not?—stuck full of pillars, roaring with echoes, and God’s light of day so dimmed and diminished in passing through painted windows that the Bible or Prayer-book is read with difficulty, the features of the preacher are lost, and he himself appears like a distant object looming through mist.

Be that as it may, the Magdalene Chapel has features of deeper interest than those it owes, in the eyes of antiquaries, to its old glass windows. Here, in stormy

times, the cradle of the Reformation was rocked. Originally a Maison Dieu, it was restored from a state of decay in the reign of James V. by Michael Macquhen, a wealthy citizen of Edinburgh, and his pious widow. Her tomb still stands in the chapel, bearing this inscription in Gothic characters :—

Heir lyis ane honorabil woman, Janet Rynd, y^e
 Spous of umquhil Micel Makquhen, burges
 Of Ed : founder of this place, and decessit y^e
 iiiii day of Decem^r. A^o. Dno. 1553.

It was a Popish endowment, and as a specimen of Popery, here is a part of the original deed :—

“ Therefore wit ye me. To the praise and honowr of Almighty God, and of his Mother the Blissid Virgin Mary, and of Mary Magdallen, and of the hail celestial court * * * has dedicate the samen to the name of Mary Magdallen, and has foundit the said chaplain, and seven poor, for to give forth their continual prayers to God for the salvation of the soul of our most illustrious Mary Queen of Scots, and for the salvation of my said umquhil husband’s soul and mine : And also for the salvation of our fathers and mothers,” &c., &c.

The widow’s tomb has been respected. So let her memory be ! She lived in days when the dawning light of truth was struggling with the clouds and shadows of a long night of error. No wonder that she did not see things clearly ! Devout according to the measure of her knowledge, in the warm interest which she expresses in the salvation of souls, she rebukes the indifference of multitudes who live in better days and have incurred a


greater responsibility. Her head was wrong, but her heart was right; and while we entertain the deepest abhorrence of Popery, and with sleepless eyes should watch its aggressive and insidious movements, let us never forget that many, resting on the True Foundation, shall be saved, though they have all but buried it out of others' sight beneath a monstrous heap of "wood, and hay, and stubble."

Only a few years after Janet Rynd enters the tomb where her ashes repose, the chapel is turned to purposes the foundress never contemplated—hers one of the many instances of the uncertainties of such endowments. For seven years have her chaplain and the poor men, with paternosters and ave-Marias, mumbled over their Latin prayers, as she directs, before "the blissid Mary Magdallen, with twa wax candles at the altar and twa at the foot of the image in twa brazen candlesticks, and twa wax torches, on the feast of the nativity of our Saviour, Pasch & Whitsunday, of the days of Mary Magdallen and of the days of the indulgences." At the end of this brief period the curtain rises, and other actors crowd the stage. The altar is removed; the images are broken; the candles are extinguished; and the light of the sun, streaming in at the windows, falls no longer on tall black cross and gilded image, but on the pages of an open Bible, and an eager assembly of nobles, commoners, and ministers—many of the last from exile and prison. Raised above the crowd, and addressing them, stands the bearded figure of Knox, his eye kindling to the bold truths he utters, and his manly voice ringing over the

hall as he pronounces the doom on Babylon. Here, in fact, the first General Assembly of the Reformed Church of Scotland was held. Here, also, Craig, once a Dominican monk, and long a captive in the dungeons of the Inquisition at Rome, preached in Latin, having been so long abroad as to have forgotten his mother tongue. And here, likewise, the body of the Marquis of Argyll was borne from the scaffold—to be *waked* by brave, pious women, and visited by many who, for a memorial of one that preferred his creed to his coronet and the truth to his life, dipped **in his blood handkerchiefs wet with honest tears.**

SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE.

III.—THE BLIND ORGANIST.

T is little more than 200 years ago since Mary Countess of Mar, and daughter of Esme Duke of Lennox, breathed her last in the Cowgate, in a house which stands opposite to the Magdalene Chapel, and still retains traces of bygone splendour. Very careful, as well as charitable and devout, was this countess, if we may judge from a household book of hers, of which these are extracts :—"7th January, 1639. Given to the poor, at Nidries' Wynd-head, as my Laidy cam from the Treasurer depute's, 6 shillings."—"1641. To the gardener in ye Abay Yard, who presentit, to my Laidy, ane flour (a flower), 6 shillings."—"16th Septr. Payit for twa torches, to lighten on my Laidy to the Court, with my Laidy Marquesse of Huntlie, 24 shillings."—"5th October. Yt day to ye Abay Kirk Broad (plate for offerings at the church door), as my Laidy went to the Sermon, 6 shillings."

The Countess of Mar passed away, leaving few foot-prints behind her. Not so the builder of this once

splendid mansion ; for here probably Sir Thomas Hope, its builder, who was King's Advocate, though one of the principal opponents of Charles I.'s schemes, organised the opposition which ended in the melancholy death of his royal master and the overthrow of his throne. In course of time, counts and countesses deserted the Cowgate. Yet it appears to have sunk very gradually into its present meanness ; for Dr. Chalmers used to tell that, when he was young, he attended a grand rout there, and I myself was present at the funeral obsequies of its long-decaying respectability. Part of the same mansion where politicians hatched the schemes which cost a king his head and an ancient dynasty their sceptre, was occupied by a member of my congregation. There, and thereby a distinguished person in the Cowgate, she had a front door opening on the street, occupying what is called in Edinburgh "a self-contained house." A *genty bodie*, as they say in Scotland, she carried her head high among her neighbours ; and lived within her green front door, which was distinguished by a knocker and her name on a bright brass plate, very much apart from them. The old lady at length died ; and we buried her, agreeably to her death-bed instructions, with honours that astonished the natives of the Cowgate. She was borne away to the churchyard in a capacious hearse stuck all over with nodding plumes, and followed by a train of mourning coaches, as well as *cortège* of ragged bairns who had never seen such a grand sight before. Accustomed as I had been to regard this old lady with her green painted front door, and its bright brass plate and knocker, and

the flowers in the sills of her windows, as the only living, though decayed, representative of the Cowgate's ancient gentility, the last gleam of its glory seemed to have gone out with her breath ; and as we moved off to the church-yard I could not but say with some sadness, "There goes the last of the Romans !" Cæsar said, I would rather be first in my own village, than second at Rome ; and with some such ambition perhaps my worthy friend preferred the importance which her house and wealth gave her in the Cowgate to a very secondary position in genteel parts of the town ; or, her remaining in that locality may have been due to such attachments as make the Highlander weep to leave his smoky cabin and misty glen, or a half-fed native of our Hebrides cling to his stormy isle with the tenacity of the shell-fish to its rocks. In such ties let us observe how kindly God has provided for our happiness ; since, lacking these, many, ever shifting, would be the rolling stones that gather no moss, and thousands, who are so, would cease to be happy in situations which all but themselves regard as wretched.

In this house, and in the neighbouring tenements, I was engaged one day in the work of ministerial visitation. I had worn well through the working hours, but had met little else than sights of dirt, poverty, and misery, in all shapes and forms. In one large building, swarming with inhabitants, I hardly found a family who enjoyed the ordinary comforts of life, or made any profession of religion. It was depressing, I may say, heart-breaking work. Saddened and wearied, and wearied because sad-

dened, I at length opened a door, to be as much astonished as the traveller when he lights on an oasis—green grass, corn-fields, bubbling springs, and tall waving palms—amid the desert sands. The door opened on an apartment lighted by windows whole and clean, neither patched with paper, nor stuffed with rags, nor crusted with dirt like bottles of old wine; a floor white with washing, and sprinkled with yellow sand, stretched to the fireplace, where the flames, reflected from shining brasses, danced merrily in the grate over a well-swept hearth-stone. Toasting on a screen hung a pair of English blankets in ample folds; the furniture, polished like a mirror, gleamed in the light of the cheerful fire, and around the whitewashed walls hung a variety of neatly-framed prints and pictures. The room had an aspect of tidiness and comfort pleasant to see anywhere, but there surprising. And I remember, as if it were yesterday, though it is now five-and-twenty years ago, of saying to myself before I had crossed the threshold or asked one question, This is the house of a church-going family! So it proved to be. It was a Bethel; God was in that place; and though, like the patriarch, I was in a sort of wilderness, this pleasant sight was a reality—no vision, like the ladder and angels of his dream.

Those who knew Edinburgh some five-and-twenty years ago, may recollect an old blind man with a face frightfully scarred by small-pox, and his grey head swathed in yards of flannel, who sat the livelong day at the top of the Mound, grinding music, of a kind, from a barrel-organ.

He and his wife, a decent couple, belonged to my Church ; and how pleased was I to find that this bright, comfortable room, was the organist's home. Blind among neighbours who laboured under no such disadvantage and deprivation, his was the only house there where dirt might have been excused, and signs of poverty expected. It was remarkable by their absence. And the key to this material difference lay in the moral difference between him and his neighbours. They never went to church ; he did. They had no respect for the Sabbath ; he kept it holy to the Lord. They had no religion ; he was a man of devout habits. They indulged their vices ; he practised the virtues of Christianity. So, even in this world, his religion was of more advantage to him than their eyes were to them. It made him careful, and frugal, and temperate. Thus, though his only means of maintenance was the charity of such Samaritans as did not pass by on the other side, he lived amid comfort to a good old age, and left behind him at his death, not only the memory of an honest and upright life, but moneys in the bank not very much short of 200*l*. Well, therefore, as I left the house, might I feel a strong desire to chalk, for his neighbours to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest," this appropriate sentence on the blind man's door, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Æsop's Fables have their moral ; and such is the moral I would draw from this veritable story. The aphorism of the Apostle is open, no doubt, to excep-

tions ; but exceptions here, as elsewhere, prove nothing ; or, if anything, the rule. Once in a century, as it was or might have been in 1796, when the thermometer sank to 48° below the freezing point, the Thames is frozen over, and London roasts oxen and holds fairs on the ice. Once in a century there is such a fall of snow as happened in 1824, when the mail-coach did not run for weeks, and a dead farmer on the borders of my old parish lay above ground for a fortnight, although the distance between his house and the churchyard was not over two statute miles. Once in a century our heat is almost tropical, as in 1826, when every crop but wheat failed ; vines ripened their grapes in the open air ; and, lighted perhaps by shepherds shaking out the ashes of their tobacco pipes, such fires burned among the dry moss and heath of the Grampians that, as I remember well, they seemed a range of active volcanoes—vast clouds of smoke rolling down their sides by day, and tremendous fires blazing on their tops by night. Such seasons are quite abnormal ; and, notwithstanding their occasional occurrence, ours is justly reckoned a temperate climate, alike happily removed from the torrid heat of India and the wintry rigours of Labrador. Now as much as these intensely hot summers and severe winters are exceptions to the generally mild character of our climate, as much is every case of extreme destitution, among the virtuous and pious, an exception to the ordinary course of God's providence and government of the world. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if not in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand,

godliness, as He has ordained, works out the results described by Paul ; and so, as many a grey-headed man on the banks of the Thames could say, "I have been young and am now old, but I never saw its waters frozen, or its ships locked fast in ice ;" so the Psalmist said, as many else could say, "I have been young and now am old, yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread." Unlike the stars in their courses, or the tides in their ebb and flow, the weather and the wind, which "bloweth where it listeth," seem often quite capricious. Yet there are causes, did we know them, to account for this summer being unusually warm, and that winter unusually cold. But, originating in remote quarters of the earth, or acting in the higher regions of the atmosphere, or belonging perhaps to the sun, whose spots are supposed to exert a marked influence on our seasons, they lie beyond our ken. But it is not usually so with those cases which seem exceptions to the Apostle's rule. All good people are not wise. There may be devotion without discretion ; saintship, but little common sense ; and an examination of those cases where piety is associated with poverty and does not succeed in the world, will often discover such peculiarities of circumstances, body, mind, talents, or temper, as sufficiently explain why godliness, amid their disturbing influences, is not profitable for the life that now is, however profitable it is for that which is to come.

One of the grand practical principles of our religion is self-denial. "If any man," said our Lord, "will be my disciple, let him take up his cross, deny himself daily,

and follow me." And since this virtue lies at the foundation of success in every business and pursuit, what more evident than that the godliness which forms and fosters it, must be profitable for the life that now is, as well as for that which is to come? The religion which enforces, and by Divine example teaches, habits of self-denial, arms a man for doing battle with the temptations that beset his path. It teaches him to say, No!—to sacrifice his passions to his interests; and abstain from those indulgences which, wasting time, squandering money, impairing health, injuring character, lead to results that, though often attributed to misfortune, are usually due to misconduct. In a hundred other cases besides those where a woman who has fallen from virtue speaks of it as a *misfortune*, the term is incorrectly applied. It is not to the freaks of fortune, but to their own folly, their silly pride, their imprudence, their bad temper, their recklessness, their want of foresight, or their unwillingness to deny themselves a present pleasure for some future good, that the poverty and privations of numbers are due. The Bible tells us of only one pious man who was a beggar—and the diseases of his body are sufficient to account for the poverty of his circumstances—and virtue soliciting charity is still a rare spectacle in the good providence of God. No doubt, I have had as many applying for work, or clothes, or money, or food, as would have filled a church much bigger than my own; yet though I cannot say of those whose misfortunes were not due to their misconduct, as a minister said of his friends as distinguished from his acquaint-

ances, that my pulpit would hold them all, they formed a small percentage of the whole.

The blind organist teaches what prudence and temperance can achieve ; and though stagnations in trade will occur to press on the resources and try the patience of the working classes, early and steady habits of self-denial would exempt them from many of the humiliations and privations they suffer. And I am sorry they ever suffer : I should like to see every man who has earned his honest bread, and contributed by his labour to the wealth of the country, in circumstances, when his head is grey, and his eyes are dim, and his joints are stiff, to live like the bees in winter. Provident, they “improve each shining hour ;” and, snug within their warm thatch, enjoy the fruits of self-denying and frugal industry when summer flowers lie withered, and winter frosts bite keenly. Alas ! that many of our working-people should doom themselves to toil on till they sink into the grave ; or till, amid privations and infirmities that gather about their grey heads like clouds around a setting sun, they have to accept the bitter bread of charity, and at an age when transplanting suits them as ill as it suits a hoary tree, are torn up by the roots and removed to the dreary walls of a Poor-House,—to be nursed, when dying, by hirelings, and thrust, when dead, into a pauper’s grave. He surely is the best friend of domestic servants, day-labourers, artisans, and their class, who seeks to save them from such a fate ; and shows them, as I undertake to do, that they may ensure themselves against it. Nothing more simple if they only would practise a

measure of that self-denial which has raised not a few of their class to fame and fortune. In the hope that some of my readers may catch inspiration from the stories, let me give a few illustrations.

I lately met with a remarkable instance of this virtue in a book called "The Reformers before the Reformation." One of these—a witty man, who seriously denied that the Apostle Peter ever enjoined eating fish on Friday, but jocularly asserted that, if he did, it was with an eye to his trade; and a bold man, who thundered away at the gates of Rome before either Luther or Calvin was born—was reared in a monastic Institution. There, however it fared with the Heads of the House, the pupils had little else to eat than vegetables dressed with oil. Too poor to purchase lights to read books, when others slept, this ardent youth, to meet and overcome that difficulty, denied himself the pleasures and, to some extent, the benefits of the table. He robbed his body to enrich his mind. He made his dinner of the vegetables—reserving the oil to feed the lamp by which he lighted his lonely cell, and pursued his studies through the long hours of night.

Another case, which occurred in Edinburgh and fell under my own observation, offers a remarkable example of the benefits and, indeed, triumphs of a determined, steady self-denial. It was the misfortune, not the fault, of the girl whose case I refer to, that she began her life as Lazarus ended his,—a beggar. She was born in that lot; and her circumstances were not her shame. But in conquering fortune through an iron will, the sternest

virtue, daily, noble, heroic self-denial, she presented in a humble sphere a truly grander spectacle than the heavens when the sun, coming forth as a bridegroom and rejoicing as a strong man to run his race, scatters the clouds that obscure his rising. I knew this girl well; and was first led to notice her by her singularly intelligent face, the modesty of her demeanour, and the clean, tidy aspect she offered as she sat, day by day, "at the receipt of custom." It was nothing to see her sit where many swept past, saying, "Oh, these beggars are a nuisance!" and some with kindly word or look dropped an alms into her hand. Before our Ragged Schools were opened such a spectacle was too common. But nothing was so uncommon as the use she made of a mendicant's hard-earned gains,—more than redeeming her poverty from contempt, and swimming in circumstances where most would have sunk. She fought a good fight; and displayed a truer heroism than the world has often graced with titles, and crowned with laurels. Beggar-girls—and no wonder—usually come to grief; go to ruin; and find a deep lower still. But so soon as night fell on the streets she rose from her post, often cold, and wet, and weary, to turn her steps to an evening school. There, paying for education out of her gains, she learned to read, to write to count, to sew. She grew expert at her needle, and, devouring books with insatiable avidity, became in many respects a remarkable scholar. Without entering more fully into her case, suffice it to say, that the poor beggar-lassie entered on a life of credit and usefulness and independence more romantic than many

novels,—she who began life in the lowest obscurity, soon rising to the surface, and riding like a life-buoy on the top of the waves. In my experience of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, I never knew one to whom these words might have been more justly applied, “Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.”

Another, and no less remarkable example of the self-denying spirit without which genius and talent often go for nothing, is found in the history of one of our greatest engineers. He began life as the only son of a poor widow, and after being a herd-boy was apprenticed to a country blacksmith. He says, as I have been told, that till he was over twenty years of age he never spent one copper penny he could save. In vain did public-houses, fairs, and markets spread their snares around him. Excellent pattern for youth to copy, he drank no drams, and smoked no tobacco. Having to choose between himself wanting the luxuries and his mother wanting the necessaries of life, or accepting them as a pauper, he chose the better part. He supported her out of his wages; and besides that, when his fellows repaired perhaps to the public-house, each evening he left the forge, where he had toiled ten long hours, to learn mathematics from a country schoolmaster who lived miles away. That lad, with begrimed face washed clean, a copy of Euclid in one horny hand and a good staff in the other, tramping foul roads and facing winter storms in pursuit of knowledge, lovingly holding up a widowed mother with one arm, and with the other stoutly pulling

his way up the ladder, offered a spectacle not only for men to imitate, but for angels to admire. He deserved to succeed, and did succeed—his the living sacrifices, which God regards with approbation and crowns with victory.

Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes ;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees its close ;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose !
Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught !
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortune must be wrought,
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought !

Deny thyself daily ! Let men observe that Christian precept, and what comforts would be secured, what evils shunned ! Could I persuade all the working-classes to deny themselves those stimulants only which they would be no worse but much better to want, how many more of them might pass the evening of life in the pleasant enjoyment of this world, and in undisturbed, devout preparation for the next ! Instead of drudging on to the last, or becoming dependent either on public or private charity, how much better to find themselves in the circumstances of a venerable friend whom, after missing for years, I encountered lately as he sauntered the streets on a bright, balmy day ? He had nothing to do but enjoy himself. Steady work, prudence, and foresight were cheering his old age with the comforts of this life, and

piety with the hopes of a better one; and I shall not forget his answer to my question, nor how his countenance grew radiant with the sunshine of his heart as he replied on my asking him, How he was?—"I have had a long day, and now I have a quiet evening." A long day and a quiet evening! What are these but the natural fruits, in the common course of Providence, of such a life of temperance and self-denial as religion inculcates?

This can be demonstrated. I have made extensive enquiries; and feel perfect confidence in asserting that foresight and frugality would place our people, save in a few exceptional cases, beyond the reach of want or the need of charity. It is the want of these which makes Poor Laws necessary—if they are necessary. To make this plain, observe that he reckons himself, and is reckoned by others, a moderate and sober man, whose outlay for tobacco, ales, and spirits does not exceed, and cannot be counted at less, than from one to three pounds a year. Thousands of workmen spend twice three pounds a year on these indulgences. Now whether spent by servant girls to gratify their love of finery, or by men to gratify their appetite for stimulants, they should know that these pounds, with accumulated capital and interest at five per cent., would in the course of years amount to a sum of money sufficient to maintain them, in comfortable and honest independence, throughout the evening of life. Some may not believe, and many may not understand this. The explanation lies in this, that nothing grows like money. Disease blights the potato;

storms shake, and rains drown, and frosts kill the corn ; flowers go to sleep at night, and trees, ceasing to grow, rest through the winter ; but night and day, in freezing cold and burning drought, money grows. For example : 1*l.* a year, laid by for forty years, and bearing interest at 5 per cent., grows at the end of that period, not to 40*l.*, but to 100*l.* ; 3*l.* to 300*l.* ; 5*l.* to 500*l.* Saving at one or other of these rates, how many who come to actual want would find themselves in old age equally independent of work and charity ? Besides, they would have the comfort of knowing that their death would not plunge any who might be dependent on them into want. Able thus to give to them that need, and provide for themselves and those of their house, they would set forth the "Genius of Christianity," and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

It is even-handed justice to say, that others besides the working-classes are wanting in the virtues of self-denial ; and that though self-indulgence on the part of the upper classes may inflict a less injury on the public, it inflicts a much greater one on their families. When the children of working men are left destitute, they find it comparatively easy to earn their bread and fight their own battle. The ability to do so rises as we descend in the scale of society. With faculties early sharpened on the grindstone of necessity, the ragged urchins of the Cowgate, for example, are more acute and awake at five years than other children are at eight or ten,—reminding one of the Polynesians, who, carried out to sea on their mothers' backs and tossed in, have to struggle for life, and thus

learn to swim before other infants have learned to walk. It is the upper and middle classes who sin most in leaving their families destitute ; and it would be difficult to find language strong enough to condemn the conduct of those who, living up to or beyond their means, leave children, they have never trained to earn their bread, to the unutterable horrors of genteel poverty.


Self-denial, a duty incumbent on all, is incumbent especially on such as make a profession of religion. I know that events, which they could neither anticipate nor avoid, occur to plunge those into want whom, as the excellent of the earth, one would account the special objects of divine care. Such cases deserve our tenderest sympathy ; and in these, besides yielding the pleasure common to every act of kindness, charity rises into something sublime. On withdrawing from scenes where we have ministered to the necessities of Christ's suffering members, we have seemed to hear the Divine voice, which said, "I was sick, and ye visited me ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; thirsty, and ye gave me drink." But if stern and heroic self-denial can make him independent, no man who regards his Master's honour and the character of religion should allow himself to become dependent on charity—to eat a morsel he has not earned, or inherited. On passing the gate of our City Workhouse when they were admitting applicants or dispensing out-door relief, I have grieved to see poor, decent Christians mixed up with a crowd who bore on their backs the rags, and in **their bloated faces the stamp, of vice.** And as I saw

God's children herded with such characters and in such circumstances as seemed to bring discredit on the care of their Heavenly Father, I felt that the self-denial which makes man independent of charity was a great Christian duty; and that in the practice of this virtue, as in a thousand other ways, he who would not seem to deny his Master, must deny himself. The tree is known by its fruit; and let Christians endeavour to recommend religion by such fruits as an ungodly world can appreciate and understand. A higher patriotism this than the bluff, honest Englishman recommended! His aid had been asked by one who, from the other's well-known wealth and generosity, reckoned on a favourable answer. He reckoned without his host. His application was met with a firm and flat refusal. Then, said the *ne'er-do-well*, changing the whining tone to insolence, "I'll lie down in the road there, and die before your door!" "Quite right, quite right," coolly replied the other; "I approve of that. Every man should do something for his country. Go, sir, and die, and let the world see the end of a drunkard!" The story, which I tell as it was told to me, presents truth—like the diamond in its natural state—in a rough form. Yet in the respectability and comforts which self-denial secures for such as practise it, who would not rather see the rewards of virtue, the pleasant fruits of piety? However humble his lot, he, as a patriot, does something for his country, and as a Christian, much for his religion, who shows by his circumstances, that, while vice is costly, virtue is cheap; that worth and want are not ordinarily linked together in the government

of God ; that, as Scripture teaches, the blind old organist illustrated, and the experience of ages proves, **GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE UNTO ALL THINGS, HAVING THE PROMISE OF THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME.**

SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE.

IV.—THE ORPHAN.

“ ‘ IS very disheartening !” said a lady to me on closing the sad story of a girl whom she had done much to save. This girl was possessed of no ordinary personal attractions, and a winning manner. The flower of a Highland glen which had been flung on the streets when its bloom was gone, she had awakened a very tender interest in the heart of my kind, good friend. The latter found her in a reformatory into which she had run for refuge ; and where her conduct had won the good opinion both of its visitors and inmates. When it was considered safe for her to leave this quiet harbour, and once more face the temptations and trials of life, this lady undertook to provide her with a situation, and an outfit. At her solicitation, an excellent and kind-hearted acquaintance of hers agreed to receive this girl as a domestic servant. Everything promised well. Her character was not *blown* in the quarter where she was going ; for her history, though confided to the mistress, was kept a secret from every one else. The

house that opened its door to her, offered a safe asylum. The home of virtue, she would breathe a pure atmosphere there ; and removed by hundreds of miles from Edinburgh, be separated from her old associates and associations. Besides, she would find, in full and regular work, one of the best safeguards of virtue ; there being no truer saying than the quaint old adage, "The devil tempts every man, but an idle man tempts the devil." With such prospects, the lady, after loading her with kindnesses, and rigging her out, so to speak, saw her one fine summer-day come forth, and sail away amid prayers and hopes of a prosperous voyage. Alas ! after some time, the post brought sad tidings. A wreck again ! Vanity, the besetting sin, and ruin of so many young people—lying, a habit which becomes so inveterate in those fallen ones, that it is hardly safe to believe one word they say—these and other vices, which need not be specified, had broken out afresh. The improvement wrought in the reformatory was just what pitch and paint make on a shattered hulk. Concealed rather than closed, the gaping seams give way before the strain of the first gale ; the sea rushes in ; the ship, becoming water-logged, refuses to obey her helm, and, foundering, goes to the bottom. So happened it in this case ; and no wonder that the lady, seeing her anxious efforts all defeated, her fairest hopes blasted, should, as she finished the story, fall back in her chair, lift up her hands, and exclaim, "Tis very disheartening !"

From time to time, God be thanked, cases occur to show that none are to be despaired of. If we but knew

what a tough battle these poor creatures have to fight with the devil, the world and the flesh, and sufficiently reflected on the difficulty of turning the course either of a river or of a life out of its old channel, we should be less easily cast down. Why forget that Rome was not built in a day? even where there was no mass of ruins to clear away and increase the difficulty. In Christ-like attempts to reclaim the vicious and raise the fallen many do nothing; some do little; but others, in a way, do, or at least attempt to do, too much. Were greater care bestowed, and a longer guardianship exercised over a fewer number, our efforts would be more satisfactory, and successful. The true guardian angels of life are not religious knowledge, or some heartfelt and sincere appreciation of divine truth, but *confirmed principles*; and till the principles of the fallen have had time to grow confirmed, how can they be expected to withstand the temptations to which, on leaving reformatories, prisons, or asylums, they are necessarily exposed?—all the more when we consider that many who leave the paths of virtue to lead a life of sin, are constitutionally soft and facile; as ready to take any shape, mould, or form, as a piece of dough

When men transplant grown trees, what pains are taken to keep them erect till they become well-rooted and catch a firm hold! Stakes are driven into the ground; to these ropes moor the tree, and by such artificial stays it is secured and supported till strong new roots anchor it to the soil. In dealing even with cases where there has been a real change of heart, we may

learn good lessons from the art of the forester ; or from the mason, who leaves the wooden centres below the arch till the cement gripes, and, locking the separate stones together, gives them the strength of one. Did we reflect on our own proneness to fall into what the Apostle calls *besetting* sins, we would expect less of poor human nature ; and, more ready to excuse the failings of others, we would be more careful to guard them from temptation. To the neglect of this on the part of parents, of masters, and still more of mistresses, is due the ruin of many children and servants, as well as the relapse of some whose cases are pronounced disheartening. Think of a lady who had received one of our ragged-school boys into her service, when she sent her silver spoons to have her crest cut on them, sending them by this boy's hands—entrusting them to his charge ! No wonder she never saw either him or her spoons again. How much better was human nature understood by him who, seated within hearing but not sight, on sending a boy into his garden to gather gooseberries, insisted on his whistling all the time he was plucking !

In following Christ, walking in the footprints of Him who went about doing good, the cases that dishearten one most are not such as I have related ; but those where we have been imposed upon, or stung by ingratitude. And some are very clever, as well as unscrupulous, imposters. There lived, for instance, in a back room of a great pile of buildings in the Cowgate, a lonely old woman, who received many kind attentions from a friend of mine. It was his habit on the Sabbath-day to pass

the interval between the forenoon and afternoon services in reading the Scriptures and praying with her ; and so favourable an impression did her conduct and conversation make on him that, in the belief that she was one of God's poor ones, he cheerfully bore the burden of supplying almost all her wants. At length she died. The lamp, which he had regarded as a light shining in a dark place, went out—but not to leave behind it the fragrance of a sweet perfume, the odour of sanctity. Her poverty and her piety were a pretence and a lie. A hoard of money was found beside the corpse ; and no better actor ever trode the boards of a theatre than lay there—in that old, dead, withered, wicked woman. Irish beggars drown one with a shower of blessings ; the Scotch, though less demonstrative, are ready with their thanks ; but, completely taking in my friend, this old crone, on receiving the crowns or half-crowns which dropped from his hand, made no fuss about his kindness. She thanked him ; but not till she appeared, by a silent prayer and upturned look, to acknowledge the goodness of Him whose almoner she recognised in the kind gentleman that supplied her wants. Horribly wicked and profane, this was shrewdly calculated for my friend's unpretending disposition and Christian modesty ; and being a singularly genuine and transparent, though a clever, man, he was completely taken in.

It was my sad, rather than good, fortune to detect as bad a case ; but before death had dropped the curtain on the actor and the stage. It may have been well for the poor sinner that it happened so, lest she also had

gone to judgment with a lie in her right hand. Before the great fire in 1824, there were houses in Edinburgh which rose to the height of fifteen storeys. Some still remain that are eleven, and many that are six and seven storeys. It was up in one of these, in a room very poor and disorderly, breathing air close and noisome, surrounded by children sallow and ragged, that I found a mother lying—bedrid. Though thankful to have her temporal wants relieved, she appeared to take the deepest interest in what concerned her soul; and as the weary days and nights were spun out on that bed, a gracious work seemed to be going on within her; a hopeful preparation for the hour when she would exchange that poor dwelling for a mansion in glory. On visiting her, I had never to ask for a Bible; far less, as in some other cases, to see this drawer, and that cupboard searched, before one was forthcoming. Hers was always at hand, on the bed, by her pillow. After my visits had continued for awhile, it struck me as strange that all our alms seemed to make no change for the better in her house, but passed away like water poured on thirsty sand. Was it possible that she was addicted to drinking; and that the peculiar odour of her breath, which I felt when once bending over her in prayer, was due to this? I was alarmed; for I had learned by this time to scent out the cursed vice—notwithstanding the peppermint, onions, and other such like things which tipplers chew to hide it. But the suspicion was so painful, it implied such shocking profanity on the part of this poor woman, that I dismissed it. Thus matters went on; till, on entering the room one day without

knocking, my suspicions returned on seeing her suddenly thrust something under the pillow. She looked caught ; was ill at ease ; and betrayed in her face fears which she vainly attempted to conceal. I was determined, if possible, to be at the bottom of the affair. So when her daughter, a little girl, left the room, as if too hurried that day to remain and pray with her, I also left ; and following close on the girl's heels, caught her half-way downstairs. To save the child from the temptation of telling a lie, I assumed, on questioning her, that her mother did drink ; and though the creature—my heart the while bleeding for her—fenced and equivocated somewhat, enough came out to make me retrace my steps. On returning, I went right up to the bed ; and, without a word of explanation, thrusting my hand under the pillow where the Bible lay, I pulled out and held up a whiskey bottle!—the black idol to which this wretched woman was sacrificing our charity, her own children, both her body and soul, with a pretence of piety inexpressibly shocking. It was a painful discovery to us both ; but most felt perhaps by me who suddenly saw all my hopes shattered—as the bottle would have been, had I, yielding to my first impulse, dashed it to shivers on the floor. I pitied the mother and her miserable children too much to shake off the dust of my feet against her—all angry feelings at this gross imposture being lost in the death, and buried in the grave of my cherished hopes ; but no wonder that, as I descended the stair, and took my sad, weary way home, I should have been heard to say, “ ’Tis very disheartening ! ”

As if he himself had met many such disappointments, and felt and feared their tendency to harden the heart, the Apostle says, "Be not weary in well-doing"—a needless exhortation, if generosity were never wounded by ingratitude, nor our efforts to do good foiled and frustrated. Nor let us shut up our bowels of compassion against the poor, as if the vices of selfishness and ingratitude were peculiar to them. The serpent that stings the bosom which warms it into life, is bred elsewhere than in the Cowgate, and such humble localities. I have known instances of ingratitude among a higher class, which the denizens of the Cowgate would hear of with astonishment, and regard with contempt. It has been elsewhere, never among them, that I have seen a benefactor pulled down by those whom he had generously supported—his cruel fate, that of a wall which had screened and succoured the tender shoots of an ambitious plant. Clinging to every point of support, they clomb upward; thrust themselves into every opening, and wormed their way into its heart; but it was, as they grew, to rend the kindly wall asunder, and, offering their rank foliage as a purchase to the storm, to hurl to the ground what had nursed their infancy and sustained their weakness.

Apart from these considerations, who that reflects on his own ingratitude to God will not learn to expect and bear with it when others show it to himself? What are all the kindnesses which we appear to have thrown away on them to those God has showered down on us—to do us no apparent good, nor yield Him any suitable return? How should it fare with the best of us, were

He provoked, by our abuse of them, to withdraw or withhold His mercies? Who sins against us as we sin against Him? Yet, though we are daily crucifying His Son and grieving His Spirit, He is “not weary in well-doing”—enforcing, as well by His divine example as by His divine authority, the gracious words of Jesus: “Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; bless them which curse you; pray for them which despitefully use you—as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for He is kind to the unthankful and the evil.”

“Blessed is he that *wisely* doth
The poor man’s case consider.”

So run the opening words of the 41st Psalm, in the Scotch version. Wisely? He *wisely* considers the case of the poor who, wherever it is possible, supplies them with work rather than money; who helps them to help themselves, who encourages them to self-exertion, and teaches them self-respect; who patronises not indolence but industry, not the intemperate but the sober; who applies his money to relieve the misfortunes that come from the hand of Providence, rather than such as are the divinely ordained and salutary penalties of vice. And who thus goes to the work of Christian benevolence will meet with many cases to cheer him on, and keep him up to this mark, “Be not weary of well-doing.”

For a beautiful illustration of this let us go down to the Cowgate; and, entering a low-browed close, climb

the stair of one of its picturesque but toppling tenements. The house (which has been demolished of late years), like not a few still standing, indicated the shifts people were put to, for room, in walled towns. Storey was piled on storey, till the lights that gleamed in the upper windows looked like stars. We owe pity rather than blame to the humble tenants of such lofty tenements. Tell them by all means, in the words of good Matthew Henry, that "cleanliness is nearly allied to godliness;" but for the sake of both, compel proprietors to supply water even to the topmost storeys. How can a house be clean, or the family tidy, where a mother has to descend five or six flights of stairs for every pail of water, and mount them again—perhaps with one child on her breast, and another at her apron-string? I think it true Christian work for preachers of God's Gospel to expose such wrongs—to preach, and teach, and enforce their reform. But another way of turning the limited space of walled cities to the best account, was to build the house in this wise—each storey projected further out than the one below it; and, in some cases, from tenements that thus looked nodding to their fall, there rose the gabled front of an upper apartment which had no ceiling but the slates, nor access but a trap-stair.

Such is the garret where lies the dying woman we go to visit. Picking every step along the foul close, and groping our way up flights of cork-screw stairs, we at length reach the topmost storey; and, mounting by help of hands and feet a rickety ladder, find ourselves in a room that extends from gable to gable—a curious as well

as cold place, with lines of posts stretching from end to end to prop up the crazy roof, and keep it from falling in. On our eyes getting accustomed to the feeble light, we look around, but see no furniture other than a stool, a box which serves the double purpose of cupboard and table, and a bed of straw spread out on the floor and covered with a bit of old carpet. There lies the woman, sinking into her grave ; a deserted wife, and mother of the little girl who watches by the dying bed, and who, but for God's mercy and woman's pity, would soon be cast an orphan, friendless and houseless, on a cold world.

Far down below the waves, sunk among sludge and rusty anchors and mouldering skeletons, lie pearls, diamonds, gold, and other precious things which have perished in wrecks at sea ; and from time to time, those who seek to relieve the needy and raise the fallen, diving into the lowest depths of society, light on objects of greater value. Such an one was the tenant of this hovel. I have seldom, or never, seen a death-bed like hers. The glory of heaven came streaming down on it, as through an open door. I remember how a minister, when he described a visit of Robert M'Cheyne, told me, with tears rolling down his cheeks, that even for some days after that saintly man had left his house, it seemed a very holy place. I can understand that. Such seemed to me the cold, bare garret where this saintly woman lay a-dying—so triumphant was her victory over death ; so strong her faith ; so bright her hopes ; so calm her spirit ; her sense of God's holiness so like that of the angels who, with veiled faces and feet, worship before the

throne ; her love of the Saviour so like what I fancy theirs to be who have seen Him, whom He has welcomed at the gates of glory. For such a death it were worth enduring her trials and closing life, as she did, on a pallet of straw.

It was through fire and water that she had been brought, notwithstanding her poverty, "into a wealthy place." Her father was a respectable manufacturer in the west of Scotland. After his death a brother's profligacy made shipwreck of their fortunes ; reducing her and a sister, who both came to Edinburgh, to the necessity of earning their bread. On the death of her sister, who soon sank under the toil and late hours of needlework, she married a sawyer ; and he, dying after a short time, left her a widow with an infant daughter to support. Difficulties now beset her such as have driven some women to an infamous life. She sought to escape them by marrying an Irish labourer ; and "fleeing from a lion, a bear met her." Brutally used, and in the end deserted by him, she was reduced to terrible extremities. At this time, not unlike the mother whom the prophet found seeking a few sticks to dress her own and her son's last meal, this poor woman one day left her cabin on the edge of a wood to gather some fuel. She did not meet a prophet to fill the empty meal barrel ; but the prophet's Master. The sighs of the wind among the branches was the only answer returned to the sighs of her breaking heart. No voice in the wood startled her like that which called "Adam, Adam," amid the trees of Eden. Yet that wood was the place and that dark hour the time of

her heavenly calling. Her misery was as much blessed to her, as the Prodigal's to him. Moved by a divine impulse, she threw herself down on the ground at the root of a tree, and, to use her own expression, "for the first time in her life prayed from her heart to God,"—pouring out her sorrows before Him who is "a very present help in the time of trouble." On that day she entered on a new existence—in the words of Scripture "having nothing, yet possessing all things." There was no change, indeed, in her outward circumstances other than this, that, though God's waves and billows continued to break over her, she was not now drifting on a lee-shore, but riding the wild sea by an anchor storms never tore from its hold. As to her outward circumstances, these became worse rather than better ; for on returning to Edinburgh with a delicate and enfeebled frame, she found herself unable, on attempting it, to earn daily bread. She or her daughter must beg. It had come to that. A bitter alternative ; but she decided well, wisely, nobly. Sending her girl to school, she rose from her knees where she had sought strength to bear the cross, and bowing her head meekly to the will of God, went forth to ask for alms. May we learn from this, and especially from what I go on to relate, to treat even beggars courteously—they may be saints ; though disguised, heirs of the kingdom.

"O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest," happy was it for you, and for your child happier still, that before you had long travelled these hard streets on your weary rounds, you accosted one who did not need such counsel !

This was a young lady who had left "the braes of Angus" for Edinburgh, and had a heavy enough burden of her own to carry. She at first declined the poor woman's appeal; but did it so tenderly and courteously, that the other, painfully familiar with harsh and rough refusals, thanked her "for giving her a civil answer." Surprised and touched with this, she stopped; and having inquired into the woman's circumstances, began to feel a deep interest in her. This issued in blessed results. She visited her; helped her in many ways; smoothed her dying pillow: and, after seeing her take wing to glory, spread her own kind wing over the orphan who wept at the dead mother's side. She took the lone one from that garret to her own home, and became as a mother to her. And when deeds that have been sung by bards, and rewarded by public honours, are forgotten, this, done in the secrecy of Christian modesty and on the humblest stage, shall be brought out to light and have an imperishable reward. Rewarded indeed already, this kind and excellent woman has never had to regret yielding to a generous impulse, doing both a brave and benevolent action. Hers was the faith, and hers has been the experience, of a poor Irishman, within whose home in the Cowgate I found a bright, rosy, fair-haired boy—an adopted child. In answer to my inquiries, the mother of the family said—

"Oh, you see, your Reverence, that its father and mother who lived in the next room, died of *the fever*, leaving the poor thing all by itself in the world. So Pat, that's my man, says to me, 'Mary, we've plenty o'

childer of our own, but we'll take it in. We'll never miss the orphan's bread."

Nor did the benefactors of this girl. She grew up to be a credit and a comfort to them. And when I look on her photograph which, sent from London where she resides, now lies on the table before me, and recognise in this picture of a respectable and well-conditioned woman the features of the poor lassie I had seen standing so lone and sad in that wretched garret beside a dying mother, I feel a renewed assurance that the blessing of the Father of the fatherless, the God of the widow and orphan, will rest on those who pity and relieve the miseries of the poor.

I would hold up this case for imitation. It presents a peculiarly wise example of what, with all due respect to them, is above doctrinal creeds, Churches, and denominational distinctions, namely, "pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father"—a religion which, according to the Apostle, is "To visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world." The young lady who acted so generously was not then in affluent, or even, as people would say, in very easy circumstances. Knowing that, I expressed some surprise, not at the kindness, but at the boldness of her generosity; and learned by her reply, to esteem her as much for her wisdom as I loved her for her kindness. "When my sister and I," she said, "came here, it was to see an amount of misery which we felt, though inclined, altogether unable to relieve. To attempt helping many cases was to dissipate our limited

means ; and do real good to none. So we resolved to apply our charities within narrow bounds ; to fix on an individual case ; not relax our hold, to take up another of those that were ready to perish, till we had saved one."

Wisely resolved ! Trying to meet the claims of many, people waste their means of doing good, and permanently benefit none. According to those who have studied his habits, the lion knows better how to run down his prey—selecting, it is said, one of the herd, nor desisting from pursuit of it to pounce on any that may chance to come between them. However it doubles, however it dashes through the flock where others seem to offer a fatter feast and easier prey, on its track he keeps : follows all its windings ; ever bounding at its heels till he has run it down, and with a roar and spring buries his teeth in its quivering flesh. As God teaches the lion to act in slaying, so does this lady teach us to act in saving. If, instead of abortive attempts to relieve every beggar, and meet all cases that turn up, we, and our families, becoming blind and deaf to other claims, would fix on one, two, or three cases, as we are able, our efforts would be much more satisfactory and successful. We might not appear so busy as a worthy doctor of divinity, who, becoming a member of the committee of every good scheme in Edinburgh, had hardly even seated himself in one, when, pulling out his watch, he seized his umbrella, and was off,—saying, "I have another committee to attend." We might not appear to be doing so much good, and yet would really do a great deal more.

We stand, as it were, on a shore which resounds with the cries of men and women perishing before our eyes. We can swim. God helping us, we rush into the boiling surf, and breasting the billows, strike out for the drowning. We reach them ; but it is not to hold up the sinking head of one, and then, turning aside, to do the same office to another—that were to prolong, not relieve their misery. All we cannot save ; not more than one, perhaps : and certainly but one at a time. So, selecting first a child, a woman—some one least able to continue the struggle—we fix our left hand in their flowing hair, and with the right buffet our way back to the shore ; nor relax our grasp, nor stay our strong, rapid strokes, till spectators, who prayed God to help us as they watched our head rising and sinking among the waves, raise a long, loud shout of joy, and receive from our hands the living prey, plucked from the jaws of death. Thus nobly did this young woman, and her sister. Between them, they bore the orphan in their loving arms, and brought her safe to land. Had they attempted more, they would have accomplished less : and while we admire their spirit, let us think how few there are but may copy their example. Let us try it, and, in the words of Scripture, **“Go and do likewise.”**

SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE.

V.—THE CONVICT.

PART I.



AT the head of the Cowgate stands the Grass-market, a *place*, in point of size and shape, not unlike the Piazza di San Marco at Venice. Mean as its buildings would look beside those of the Place of St. Mark, and dull as are its skies compared to those blue heavens of sunny Italy, it presents objects which carry us away to still sunnier climes, and to the old days when, with an enthusiasm which we would wish to see shown in the cause of Missions, Europe rose as one man to wrest the birth-place and tomb of our Saviour out of the hands of the Infidel.

Flat-roofed houses, such as may be seen in the photographs of Eastern cities, still stand there, memorials of the old Crusaders, who, regardless of the need of steep-pitched roofs to carry off the rains and snows of our northern climate, preserved in their buildings the memory of years passed in fighting the battles of the Holy Sepulchre, on the plains of Esdraelon and in the streets of

Jerusalem. The days of chivalry and romance are gone
—in the words of the poet,

“The knights are dust,
Their swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints we trust.”

These roofs, where the knights may occasionally, after the fashion of the East, have spread their couch, and, as they gazed up into the heavens, fancied that they were still in the land which was trod by the Blessed Feet that were nailed to the Tree for us, are now turned to very utilitarian purposes. In a breezy summer day the newly-washed clothes of the poor tenants, the successors of the Templars and Knights of St. John, are flying and fluttering there in the wind.

How they escaped the destruction decreed by the Scottish Reformers on all objects of idolatrous worship, it is not easy to say ; but the black iron crosses of these ancient Orders still stand sharp out against the sky above some of their houses. Serving only perhaps the purpose of armorial bearings, they may not have been objects of idolatrous worship or superstitious reverence. This would account for their preservation : for the idea, common in England and current also to some extent in Scotland, that Knox and his coadjutors defaced and even destroyed the old cathedrals, is a mistake,—one that betrays on the part of those who circulate and believe it a complete ignorance of history. Knox and his associates did indeed procure the destruction of the monasteries—the retreats of lazy and the strongholds of bigoted ecclesiastics ; acting on what is now generally admitted to be

the statesman-like wisdom of his own pithy saying, "Pull down the rookery, and the rooks will leave it." So far from destroying, or countenancing the destruction of, any of the fine old churches or cathedrals, he procured an Act of Council, imposing a heavy punishment on any of, as he calls them, "the rascally multitude," who should destroy or deface anything but images, and other objects of Popish idolatry. It is due to the character of our great and good Reformers, who have been often ignorantly and sometimes maliciously traduced, to state this fact, and that the destruction of the fine old ecclesiastical buildings lies in most instances at the door of the landed proprietors who allowed their tenants, and of the town councils who allowed the citizens, to make quarries of them.

But this *place*, the Grassmarket, is more interesting to Scotchmen by its connection with the Covenanters than the Crusaders. Nor to Scotchmen only; for who that, with us, holds it equally detestable to force Protestantism on a Popish, Episcopacy on a Presbyterian, Presbytery on an Episcopalian, or Christianity on a heathen country, will not admire men standing up for the rights of conscience—even of an unenlightened conscience? Religion is a sacred realm, where we have no king but conscience, or rather God. Nor was Christ's crown ever well defended, or His authority permanently enforced, by any sword but His own. Well, it was here, where the place of execution is still marked by paving-stones arranged in the form of a cross, that many a good man laid down his life in the dark days of old. We have

often fancied that we saw that *place* one sea of heads, with every eye fixed on the tall black gallows from which, amidst a hushed and awful silence, rose the last psalm of a hero of the Covenant, come there to play the Man ; or that we heard those last sublime words of McKail, "Farewell, father and mother, friends and relations ;—farewell, the world and all delights ;—farewell, sun, moon, and stars ; welcome, God and Father ; welcome, sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant ;—welcome, blessed Spirit of Grace, and God of all consolation ;—welcome, glory ;—welcome, eternal life ;—and, welcome, death !"

Sunk into a low estate, the Grassmarket, with the exception of a few respectable tenements, is now given up to mean inns, tippling shops, and low lodging-houses. It was in one of the latter that, as minister of the parish, visiting every house, I first found myself in the scene of a murder. I had fallen among thieves before—though not to suffer the fate recorded in Bible story. That rencontre happened in the College Wynd, soon after I came to Edinburgh, and produced feelings sufficiently unpleasant to leave a very distinct impression on my mind. In connection with those efforts which the Churches are now making to evangelise the heathen masses of our towns it were well for visitors who may expect such rencontres to go, as our Lord sent out His disciples, two by two ; but, young and strong then, I had no fear. So, on a door being opened, where I had knocked, by a ruffian-looking fellow, whose face was deeply pitted by small-pox, and furnished with but one

eye—that, however, black as coal, and piercing as a hawk’s—though evidently unwelcome, I pushed the door open, announced myself as minister of the parish, and passed into the room. Two men sat by the fire—one had the seedy dress, the wasted form and down-looking, suspicious air of a gaol-bird; the other was a broad-shouldered, powerfully-built man, with a bold, reckless stare, a bandage bound over a bloody brow, and a head of shaggy hair, covered with an enormous fur cap. Neither of them rose when I entered; made any show of civility; spoke a word in reply to my Good-morning; but, like their neighbour who had opened the door, maintained a dead and ominous silence. There was that both in the apartment and its tenants which made me see at a glance that I had got among the Philistines. But as nothing was to be gained by showing the white feather, and something might be made of them by a kind and Christian bearing, I seized the only unoccupied stool; and sitting down, began, after opening up the way by some common remarks, to tell them my message and of my Master. Whether it was because my bodily appearance, unlike the Apostle Paul’s, was not contemptible, or that guilt is cowardly,—for, as the Bible says. “the wicked flee when no man pursueth;” and “there were they in great fear where no fear was,”—or that they felt their need of saving mercy, or that, as many of these rooms are divided from each other only by thin partitions, a scuffle would have been easily heard by the neighbours and help perhaps obtained, I know not; but after awhile we separated—

in peace ; each party, I fancy, equally pleased to be rid of the other.

It was there, in the College Wynd, I first came in contact with the criminal population ; but it was here, in the Grassmarket, that I first found myself in a room where murder had been committed, and not long after the event. The access to the house itself was by a foul close, and to the apartment that was the scene of the murder by an outside trap-stair, the ground story being a stable, visible from above through the gaping seams of the floor. It was a long, wretched, dimly-lighted room, containing some half-dozen beds. I found the mistress of the house sitting by the fire smoking a pipe, and with her other three women—coarse-looking dirty slatterns—one of them a negress, black as the back of the chimney. Though afterwards, on my telling her that I knew that some of them were present at the murder, and that I stood on the very floor where blood had been shed, the landlady admitted it, she at first pretended ignorance. Not only so, she waxed very angry, and swore hard, looking like one more ready to use a knife than an argument in a dispute. I spoke seriously to them about their souls ; but, with the exception of one, on whose face I saw a sad expression stealing, and the tears starting to her eyes, the others remained unmoved, hard as the hearth-stone ; and I left them, feeling that women have special need to seek God's grace to make them and keep them good : for, as the finest wine makes the sourest vinegar, they, on betaking themselves to a life of sin, become viler and more loathsome even than men. By

nature more emotional, their character for good or evil is intensified ; it being with them as with those lands where the soil, stimulated by the sun's tropical heat, grows the sweetest fruits, and also the rankest poisons. They are like the prophet's figs, "the good are very good, and the evil are very evil, so evil that they cannot be eaten."

The murder I refer to was committed by a man on his wife—the result of drinking, one of its many bitter and accursed fruits. Delirium, as well as drink, had probably something to do with it ; for this man had a nephew hanged for the same crime in Edinburgh a few years ago ; and though he also acted more or less under the influence of drink, pretty strong evidence was led to show that there was hereditary insanity in the family. These cases, and many others, present a salutary warning. I not only believe, but am sure, that every one who possesses good health is most likely to preserve it by abstaining from the use of all intoxicating stimulants, regarding and using them as drugs, which they are proved to be by this peculiarity, that they make well men ill, and ill men well. But whoever should be total abstainers, there can be no difference of opinion about this, that all those who are of a highly excitable and nervous temperament, especially such as have any constitutional tendency to insanity, should totally abstain. For them to use stimulants is to pour oil, not on water, but on fire. Theirs is a system that requires to be soothed rather than stimulated ; and what is true of all is especially true of them, they don't know what crimes they may commit under drink. It was the duty of my

late excellent friend and colleague, Mr. Sym, to visit this wretched murderer in the gaol, and attend him to the scaffold ; and I remember of him telling how surprised and shocked he was, on repairing to the condemned cell at five o'clock in the morning of the day of execution, to find him eating a very hearty breakfast, and, to all appearance, enjoying it as much as if he was about to go, not to the gallows, but to his day's work. This might arise from the apathy which is often associated with mental imbecility, or it might be an illustration of the words of Scripture, "The wicked have no bands in their death." If the latter, it was an awful warning of the extent to which sin can sear the conscience. The man was executed ; and though satisfied that public executions have the effect of brutalising the crowds who attend them, and that private ones were better, I do not sympathise with those who would quite abolish the penalty of death. I read these words as a commandment, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Still, so dreadful a penalty should certainly never be awarded by Christian judges where there is any proved deficiency of intellect, or in any clear case of hereditary insanity ; nor, indeed, executed on any but cold-blooded, deliberate murderers. In all cases, save the last, imprisonment for life, while more congenial to the spirit of the Gospel, would satisfy the public conscience and ensure the public safety.

It was from the neighbourhood and the society of such neighbours as I have described, that the convict came whose case suggested a title to this article. One

evening I was told that a man who wished to see me was waiting in the dining-room. After some considerable delay I went there, and found a stranger standing in the room, whose dress and face expressed great poverty, and something more. On asking him what he wanted, he hummed and hawed and beat about the bush, and began what promised, or rather threatened, to be a long story. I told him to hold up his head like a man, come at once to the point, tell me what he wanted, and if it was right and reasonable and within my power, he would get help. At this time the whole country was in a ferment, fright, and fever about ticket-of-leave men. The newspapers were filled with terrible stories of their robberies and murders. No wonder, therefore, that I was astonished, and almost startled, when he blurted out, "I'm a ticket-of-leave."

He had gone astray in the first instance through the temptations of a whisky-shop where he had been employed as a servant. Learning to drink there, one day, when muddled, he had stolen some of his master's property, and, being convicted, was sentenced to so many years of transportation or imprisonment. In proof of his good behaviour he showed me a Bible which he had received from the governor of our prison, on the fly-leaf of which that gentleman had written a very favourable account of him ; and also a certificate to the same effect from some of the officials of Portland prison, in England. Since regaining liberty, before his sentence was fully expired, he had returned to the paths of honesty, and made a great struggle to earn his bread. But unaccus-

tomed to the hard labour of the only work which he could procure, his strength had given way, and the poor wretch had left the hospital to which he had been carried but some weeks before he called on me. He was out of employment, and could get none. Before making an appeal to me he had pawned every article of his furniture, and every rag of clothing that he and his wife could spare; and on the night he came to my house he had left her and his children in his own, without bread or bed, without either fire or light. And he wound up this sad story—which I found to be all true—by bursting into a flood of tears, and saying, “I don’t want to be a thief. I wish to live an honest life; but, sir, unless you help me, I’ll be driven to desperation—to commit crime!”

A sad and dreadful case! Here was a man in this humane and Christian land, apparently doomed to evil and denied a chance of doing well. The fly-leaf of the Bible, the certificate from Portland might possibly be of no more value than the paper they were written on, or any rogue’s profession of penitence. But in the side-board by which he stood there lay a proof of his honesty and integrity not to be misunderstood or gainsaid. There all my silver lay; the drawers which contained it stood unlocked; and he stood all alone by them in that room for at least ten minutes—the glittering prize within reach of his hand. Unless that had been an honest hand, and he an honest man, I had been left still poorer than John Wesley, who might have been wealthy, but, living to deny himself for Christ, never had more plate than two silver spoons.

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It is a dreadful thing to close the door against any man's or woman's reformation. Religion calls us to hold it open to the worst, even as God holds it open to us who can—knowing more ill of ourselves than we can know of others—and ought to say with Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Oh that some old prophet would rise from his grave to expose the sin and denounce the folly of our country! She spends enormous sums in punishing crime and trying to reform criminals during the term of their imprisonment, but takes no proper steps to give them a chance of doing well when they return to society. When they have left the prison, society casts them out of her bosom as a foul thing; or rather, as if they were vipers—and not men, blood of our blood and bone of our bone—shakes them back into the fire. This, a policy so unwise, and so alien to the merciful spirit of the Gospel, was strongly brought out by the difficulties the ticket-of-leave man had encountered before he clung to me to rescue him from drowning, and by all my efforts to keep his head above water proving failures in the end.

A few days before his visit, I had returned from Manchester, where I had seen, in John Wright, perhaps the most remarkable philanthropist of our day. Belonging to the working classes, he had been a time-man in one of the mills there. When the factory bell rang, and the day's work was over, and some of his fellows returned to the comfort of their homes, and others went to spend

their evenings and waste their wages in spirit or beer-shops, John, moved by a Christ-like compassion, turned his steps to the prison, and passing from cell to cell spent his evenings in reading God's Word to the prisoners, in praying with them, in instructing them, in holding out to the worst the hope of heaven in a better world, and of a redeemed character and honest life in this. Wherever he found a hopeful case, he grudged no labour and spared no pains to have a situation ready for the person on his leaving the gaol. Take, for example, the case of a man who had stolen the tools of his fellow-workmen. By God's blessing on John Wright's instructions, this prisoner had undergone a great change of heart. Some days before his time was out, Wright went to his former master to tell him how penitent the thief had become ; how anxious he was to live an honest life ; that in short there was every reason to believe that he had found salvation where the gaoler of Philippi found it—within the walls of a prison. He pleaded with his former employer to take the penitent back. The gentleman was himself not unwilling to give the man a trial, but he feared that his workmen might object to the company of a convicted thief ; besides dreading that he might steal again, and thus expose the innocent to suspicion. Admitting the force of this, John asked the master if he would receive him back provided his workmen made no objections. He consented ; and John's next step (for he was resolved to leave no stone unturned) was to hold a meeting with the workmen. They assembled. Up rose Wright, and with a face beaming with benevolence,

and a tongue to which love and piety lent persuasive oratory, he pleaded the cause of the poor convict; he implored them to give him a chance; though not rich himself in this world's goods, he undertook out of his own poverty to make good whatever his *protégé* might steal. The result was worthy of the kind hearts though rough hands of English workmen. To their honour it has to be told that they also assented. He was received back; and Wright's faith and their kindness had their reward. By years of the strictest integrity and honest labour this convict thoroughly redeemed his character. A noble man is John Wright; single-handed, pursuing such a course as I have described, he has saved as many as three or four hundred convicts, leading them back to the paths of virtue, and restoring them to the bosom of society.

To return to our ticket-of-leave man. With a little help to tide over a day or two, I gave him a letter to one of our principal house-painters in Edinburgh, telling what Wright had done, and entreating him to give the bearer work, and so save at least one poor wretch from ruin. My friend acceded to the request, and the poor fellow did his work well and honestly, and gave his master satisfaction. He, resorting now to the house of God, began to fill his room with furniture, and to lose that peculiar expression which those acquire who have gone through the curriculum of crime. Sad to say, he became a wreck after all; took to living by his wits; and, the last time I heard of him, was raising money by playing tricks on people's compassion—sometimes lying

on the roadside as one faint and famishing with want ; at other times simulating the convulsions of an epileptic. Let him not be too harshly blamed ! Slackness of trade, not his misconduct, led to his losing employment under the master to whom I had recommended him. He did not sink without a struggle. He sought, and got one place after another. But his antecedents had become known. "Convict" clung to him like the poisoned robe to Hercules ; and, on that account refused employment, or dismissed from it, he was in a sense doomed to his fate. Refused here, and dismissed there, the unhappy man at length yielded to despair, and gave up the struggle—dragging his wife and children down into the same perdition with himself. The way of transgressors is hard, says God's Word—and such cases are full of warning ; but such dealing with those that have fallen into crime is little in harmony with the mind of Him who said, "Go, and sin no more."

How large the number of convicts of one class or another is, may be estimated from this most deplorable and dreadful fact, that the Rev. W. C. Osborne, the Chaplain of Bath Gaol, who devoted much attention for many years to the condition of juvenile delinquents, calculates that about 10,000 children are annually sent to prison. Now by far the largest number of these, considering the circumstances in which they have been born and reared, are more deserving of pity than of punishment. Place them in such circumstances, and what better would our own children be than the thousands who, first ne-

glected and then punished, fill our gaols, and are the disgrace of our Churches and the danger of our country? By Reformatory, but especially Ragged Schools, by a kinder, wiser, and more Christian method of dealing with our poor, by our Churches of all denominations putting forth greater efforts to evangelise the heathen masses of our towns, by Government considering it its duty to employ the officials and revenues of the State more in the way of preventing crime than punishing it, God and conscience call us to a grand Christian work ; to much greater efforts on behalf of the lapsed and lost. A wail, a loud and pitiful cry, to the same effect, has come from the prison itself. It reached the House of Lords through the Earl of Harrowby, in one of the most remarkable petitions to which the Peers ever listened. It ran thus :—

“The petition of the undersigned prisoners in the County House of Correction, at Preston, in Lancaster,

“Humbly Sheweth,

“That your petitioners have had painful experience of the miseries, bodily and spiritual, produced by beer-houses, and are fully assured that those places constitute the greatest obstacles to the social, moral, and religious progress of the labouring classes. . . . By frequenting them, parents bring their families to disgrace and ruin, and children are familiarised with vice and crime. . . . Your petitioners have all been drawn into offences and crimes of which they might otherwise have remained innocent. We speak from our own direct and bitter knowledge, when we declare that beer-houses lead to

Sabbath-breaking, blasphemy, fraud, robbery, stabbings, manslaughters, and murders !

“Your petitioners, therefore, desiring that others may be saved from the fate which has overtaken them, humbly, but most earnestly, pray that your Lordships would be pleased to take such measures as will, on the one hand, lead to the entire suppression of the beer-house curse, and, on the other, promote whatever may hold out the prospect of wholesome and rational amusement for the working population of the kingdom.”

Signed by 247 male prisoners.

“This petition,” says the Rev. John Clay, Chaplain of the House of Correction at Preston, and a man as eminent for his integrity as for his labours and philanthropy, “was drawn up after I had carefully read upwards of eighty written statements, by as many different prisoners, and was, as far as I could make it so, a digest of those statements. . . . As to the signatures themselves, I believe none were ever more heartily attached to a petition than these.” We had a singular echo of this earnest and strange cry a short time ago from the lips of a prisoner in the High Court of Justiciary. After sentence had been pronounced, and as the policemen were removing him from the bar, the condemned man turned round, and facing the bench where the judges sat in their robes of office, he fixed his eyes on them, and in a voice that rang over all the Court exclaimed, “*It were better for you to close the whisky-shops than punish the crimes they lead to.*”

Better days are dawning over the heads of those who

in so many instances have been more sinned against than sinning. But our space is exhausted, and leaving what we have to say further on the subject to another article, in the meantime we commend to the interest, sympathy, and prayers of Christian men and women, “such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.” Let us not doubt that, if we are diligent in working, and noble in sacrificing, and urgent in praying, He who is very pitiful and of great mercy will in respect of them, as of us, in a sense convict as well as they, make good these words :—

Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron ;

Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High :

Therefore He brought down their heart with labour ; they fell down, and there was none to help.

Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.


Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men !

For He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE.

V.—THE CONVICT.

PART II.

“ MAN overboard ! a man overboard !”—such was the cry that, a few days ago, in the Channel, rose and ran along our deck in rapid, eager, earnest tones.—A man overboard !—I had often seen the words in print, as sitting by the quiet fire-side on a winter evening, I read stories of the sea, and of hair-breadth escapes by flood and field. But it is another thing to hear that dreadful sound ; to feel it strike the heart like a knife ; and to pass—for it came more suddenly on us than a clap of thunder—in one moment from a dreamy calm into a state of intense and almost agonising anxiety.

We had reached mid-channel between the coasts of France and England, and, over one of the smoothest seas keel ever ploughed, were making rapid way for the white cliffs of Dover, which rose at every turn of the paddle-wheels higher and more visible over our bows. Above, the sun was riding in a sky almost as blue and bright as

we had left in Italy : the sea lay around like a sheet of glass ; there was not a breath of wind to stir a leaf, or disturb the long, black train of smoke which we left hanging quietly over our foaming wake. Nature had drawn off her fierce and fiery elements to thunder in a storm which was at that hour breaking on Paris—leaving to us a sky without a cloud, an ocean without a wave, and a calm which, soothing some to sleep, and charming others into day-dreams and quiet contemplation, was broken by no sound but the quick and steady beat of our paddles. Looking back with grateful hearts to the Providence which had preserved us during a tour of some months unharmed, as well when we stood on the edge of the fiery volcano, as when we rode giddy paths along the face of mountains that plunged down into frightful gorges and rose overhead in precipices crowned with eternal snows, and looking forward with happy hearts to the pleasant prospect of casting anchor in our home, my fellow-traveller and I were seated on deck, enjoying the quiet scene and the shade of one of the ship's boats which hung in her slings at our back.

All of a sudden the cry rose, "A man overboard !" turning this scene into a whirlwind of wild excitement. Men threw themselves on the boat which had lent us its grateful shade. It was now to do better service. In less time than I take to tell, it was loosed—was dropped—the rope as it flew through the mate's hands taking the skin with it ; was afloat ; and five of the crew tumbling into it, they were off—bending their backs to the strain, and their oars to the breaking. As the alarm broke on

the calm air, and rang from stem to stern, passengers came crowding up from the cabin ; and, the strong elbowing the weak out of the way without regard either to rank, or sex, or age, from all quarters a rush was made to the poop, which we soon gained to descry, terrible to see, the form of a man stretched out at full length on the water, and floating already a long way off in the white wake of our steamer. It was wonderful to see how the crew, amid the cries and wild confusion of the scene, displayed the characteristic promptitude and admirable coolness of seamen. There was neither man nor oar to seek, when they were wanted. Not an instant of time was lost ; nor was there any to lose, as the boat, springing forward like a horse, went off to the rescue, followed by our eyes and our prayers. Though the steam had been instantly shut off, our impetus had carried us far ahead of the drowning man. Still I could see how matters went with him, and that he lay like a log on the water ; gently rising and falling in the swell of our wake, but moving neither hand nor foot. Concluding that he had known the right thing to do in such jeopardy, and had possessed sufficient presence of mind, so soon as he rose to the surface, to throw himself on his back—and that, as the human body, though specifically heavier than fresh, is lighter than salt water—he had thus a good chance of floating till help arrived, I ventured, to the great comfort of some women who stood beside me, pale and trembling, to exclaim, “ He is safe ! ”

But that floating form, on which all eyes were fixed, by-and-by grew visibly less. It did not show in the

water as it had done at first. The man was sinking—that was plain. The reason this, that his clothes, parting with the air that buoyed them up, were getting waterlogged : and at this time, the boat, foreshortened, in the same line of vision with him, and now a long way astern, seemed but creeping along the sea. We got terribly impatient. Some, indeed, stood dumb, rooted to the spot ; but the feelings of others broke out into cries—of dissatisfaction, Why is not the boat better manned ? Why don't they pull?—or of despair, Oh, they'll never reach him ! He sinks ! He's gone !—or, like ours, of hope, He's on his back, and floats ! They are getting up to him ! See, they ship their oars ! Now they have him ; he is saved ! So it fell out. And offering silent thanks to Him without whom a sparrow falls not to the ground, we saw strong arms stretched over the gunwale ; and, seizing it by the head and shoulders, haul the body into the boat. Animated by the spirit of those kind angels who, as they watch the events of earth from heaven, rejoice over every sinner that repenteth, break forth into anthems and songs of praise over every soul which Jesus plucks from perdition, many on board, when they saw the drowning man in the boat, broke out into a cheer. It floated away over the waters, grateful to the ears of the gallant men who had flown to the rescue, and pulled with a will. God was thanked. The sailors hastened back with the body ; and as soon as, after a period of suspended animation on its part, and painful suspension on ours, word passed up from the cabin where it had been carried that life had

returned, universal joy diffused itself through all the ship.

A man overboard ! the cry, which seems still to ring in our ears, describes in brief and graphic terms the condition of the Convict. But how marked the contrast between the apathy of many to his fate, and the anxiety of all on board our steamer to see the drowning plucked from the jaws of death ! Alas for human nature !—thousands will rush to save a man from drowning in the sea who would not move a foot, or finger, to save him from perishing in his sins. Yet what is a life lost to a soul lost ? The struggles of the first death are soon over. Let yonder wretch alone ; raise no alarm ; man no boat ; ply no oar ; and it is but a few more gasps, “ a bubbling cry,” and his head goes down ; and ere his last breath rises in the air-bells which break on the surface of a sea that has already resumed its placid aspect, the man is dead, and his body is slowly sinking into the quiet depths of its watery grave. If he was a man of God, it is well. Ransomed by the blood of Christ, his happy spirit has gone where his sun shall no more go down, nor his moon withdraw her light ; and the days of his mourning are ended. But his is a fate inexpressibly and infinitely wretched who falls into crime ; who is lost to “ whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report : ” whose misspent life oscillates between the barred solitude of a prison and the riot of brutal debaucheries ; whose past is full of the bitterest regrets,

and whose future, wrapped in gloom, is not lighted but by the lurid gleams of "the fire that is never quenched."

To this cruel fate the convict was long doomed. The great mass of society took no interest in him. What was to them the cry, *A man overboard!*—with sumptuous feasts below, and music and dances on the deck, they left the wretch to sink, and perish. Some indeed had compassion on him. But the inhumanity and apathy of the public offered no greater contrast to the spectacle on board our steamer, to the anxiety and rush of all to save the man "overboard," than did the folly of such plans as were employed to reform convicts, to the wise and prompt steps the sailors took to pluck the drowning from a watery grave.

As I said in closing the first part of this article, a better day, thank God, has dawned, and now shines on the heads of those who, convicts and criminals as they are, have, in many instances, been fully as much sinned against as sinning. For the lapsed and dangerous classes, Reformatory, and especially Ragged, Schools are doing a great work. These destroy crime in the bud; they cut off the springs that have long poured a flood of crime and misery over the land. Our experience in Edinburgh speaks volumes in their favour; and the statistics of other places are not less remarkable. As the rooms of the ragged schools filled, the cells of the prison emptied. Our increase was their decrease. As the stream which flowed into the gaol grew less and less, it was plain to everybody that we had tapped one of the principal sources of crime; and were draining it away.

Let me illustrate this by the reports of Mr. Smith, the excellent governor of our gaol. Our Ragged, which are also feeding and Industrial Schools, were opened in the summer of 1847, and the number of children under fourteen years of age in prison when we began

In 1847 was .	.	.	.	.	.	.	5 per cent.
In 1848 it fell to	.	.	.	.	.	.	3 „ „
In 1849 „	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 „ „
In 1850 „	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 „ „
In 1851 „	.	.	.	.	.	.	$\frac{1}{2}$ „ „

—in other words, when we began our work, out of every hundred prisoners there were five under fourteen years of age. Year by year the number decreased ; until four or five years afterwards there was but one prisoner under fourteen years of age in every two hundred. Thus by means of Ragged Schools, in the course of four years Edinburgh reduced the commitments of juveniles to a tenth part of what they were before the schools were opened. In fact we did, and are doing, by Christian care and kindness, what the costly, not to say cruel, apparatus of police and prisons, banishment and the gallows, had utterly failed to accomplish. Our experiment has proved a triumph—a great, blessed, and unquestionable success. And what is now the duty of Christians, but, taking pity on those who are ready to perish, to support to the utmost of their power schemes that are based on the principles, conducted in the spirit, and imbued with the very genius of the Gospel ! Happy the man who thus saves one poor, wretched, neglected child ; who is able, though in a subordinate sense, to

adopt these lofty words, and say, "None eye pitied thee, to have compassion upon thee ; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live."

Prevention is better than cure. Still, though the churches and the country should chiefly trust, under God, to the influence of preventive measures, we are not to despise, or despair of, those of a reformatory kind. Miss Mary Carpenter, a lady no less eminent as a philanthropist than her brother, Dr. Carpenter, of London, is as a physiologist, has proved this in a book which she has lately published. It forms two volumes, under the title of "Our Convicts ;" and is deeply interesting. Formerly, two grand plans had been tried with the view of reforming convicts ; and both had proved grand failures. The one was called the Solitary, the other the Silent system. Under the first, the prisoner was immured within the four walls of a cell during the whole term of his sentence ; and there, with the exception of an official, no human creature was permitted to enter. Within the throbbing heart of a great city he was more lonely than an anchorite ; he neither saw a human face, nor heard the sound of a human voice—for long months or years a dreary narrow cell being all the world to him. This system of burying a man alive was to work wonders. Well, it was tried on an extensive scale in America ; and the result was, that many of the poor wretches sank into a state of idiocy, or became raving maniacs. It could

not be otherwise. No scheme for making bad men good, or good men better, can succeed, which, like this, traverses human nature, and sets at nought the laws of Him who made men, not solitary, but social beings.

The second, which is called the Silent system, I saw in full operation in a vast prison in London. After many strong doors had been opened, and locked behind us, we were ushered into a large hall, and the company of four or five hundred convicts. A sadder sight it was never my fortune to see. They were all attired in the same garb, and engaged in the same employment—teasing oakum. Raised in a sort of pulpit, before each section, for they were divided into sections, sat a guardian, whose sole business was to keep his eyes fixed on the quota of men under his charge, and see that none either spoke, or even communicated by signs with each other. It was a strange and unearthly spectacle to see this vast crowd working on in dumb show,—apparently so subdued and crushed in spirit that, though the sound of our feet and our suppressed whispers broke the death-like silence, no head was lifted, nor face turned up to look on us. There no man might breathe a word or make a sign to his next neighbour. Alone in a crowd, each was doomed to sit during all the hours of the day, and all the days of the week, and all the weeks of the month, and all the months of the year. Anything more monstrous, outraging more the laws of God, the feelings of man, and the dictates of common sense, it is not possible to fancy.

In visiting other rooms within these gloomy walls we found large bands of tailors and shoemakers and other artisans, all convicts, plying their several trades; each with a heart bursting to hold communion with his fellows. At length we got ensconced in the office of one of the master tradesmen, and, mounting a stool, sat down to examine him. He laughed the whole thing to scorn. As a plan of reforming criminals he pronounced it to be an utter failure, regarding it with the same contempt as the head officer of the Bow Street police expressed for punishment—his answer to my question, what he thought of it as a means of reformation, being to snap his fingers and say, “I don’t give that for it.”

In those very interesting volumes to which I have referred, Miss Carpenter enters into the details of a new, humane, Christian, and common-sense system of dealing with convicts. Established in Ireland by Captain Crofton, it has yielded results so happy, and almost incredible, as to remind us of the beautiful imagery of Scripture, “the desert shall blossom as the rose.” Our space will not permit us to enter into its interesting details. Suffice it to say that it meets the peculiar circumstances of the convict, both during his imprisonment and after it; that it is based on the constitution of human nature and the laws of Providence, and is in all respects conformable to the principles and benignant spirit of our holy faith. As to its success, Mr. Hill, a very high authority in such matters, says, “In my humble judgment, the Board of Directors of Irish Convict Prisons have practically solved the problem which has so long

perplexed our Government and our Legislature—*What shall we do with our Convicts?* The results of their great experiment answer thus:—KEEP YOUR PRISONERS UNDER SOUND AND ENLIGHTENED DISCIPLINE UNTIL THEY ARE REFORMED—KEEP THEM FOR YOUR OWN SAKE AND FOR THEIRS. THE VAST MAJORITY OF ALL WHO ENTER YOUR PRISONS AS CRIMINALS CAN BE SENT BACK INTO THE WORLD, AFTER NO UNREASONABLE TERM OF PROBATION, HONEST MEN AND USEFUL CITIZENS. LET THE SMALL MINORITY REMAIN, AND IF DEATH ARRIVE BEFORE REFORMATION, LET THEM REMAIN FOR LIFE.”

Captain Crofton gives the result of his experience in these hopeful words, “I should hesitate to pronounce any convict incorrigible.” And Captain Maconochie, who, as governor of Norfolk Island, had to deal with the worst criminals our country ever flung out of its lap, bears similar testimony, in still stronger terms. In a pamphlet which he published on “Norfolk Island” in 1848, he says, “I found the island a turbulent, brutal hell, and I left it a peaceful, well-ordered community. My system desires to gain soul as well as body,—to influence, and not merely coerce. It draws the line of duty under the guidance of religion and morality: not of conventional regulation. It seeks to punish criminals by placing them in a position of severe adversity, from which only long-sustained effort and self-denial can extricate them; but it does not desire to aggravate this position by unworthy scorn, or hatred, or contempt; and, on the contrary, it respects our common nature, however

temporarily fallen or alienated. I was working *with* nature, and not against her, as all other prison systems do." "My experience," he states, in evidence given before the Select Committee of 1856, "leads me to say that *there is no man utterly incorrigible*. Treat him as a man, and not as a dog. You cannot recover a man except by doing justice to the manly qualities which he may have about him, and giving him an interest in developing them." Brave, wise, hopeful, devout, Captain Maconochie seemed to have taken for his motto these grand words, "All things are possible to him that believeth." He had faith in the grace of God and in the laws of nature ; and under his hands Norfolk Island, appropriated to the worst convicts, and once "a turbulent, brutal hell," presented one of the finest illustrations of the poet's words :—

"Faith, bold faith, the promise sees,
And trusts to that alone ;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And says, It shall be done."

I can fancy nothing better calculated to encourage my readers to pray, labour, and hope for the lost, than one case which Captain Maconochie relates, and with a brief account of which I close this article.

Charles Anderson, the son of a sailor who was drowned, being left an orphan at his mother's death, was reared in a workhouse. After serving his apprenticeship in a collier, he joined a man-of-war ; and, being severely wounded in the head at the battle of Navarino, was ever afterwards liable to be thrown into violent

fits of excitement by drink or irritation. Getting drunk in a seaport in Devonshire, Anderson engaged in a street disturbance with some other sailors ; and some shops having been broken into on the occasion, he, though quite unconscious of any participation in the crime, was tried, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. He was sent, as a convict, to New South Wales. Believing himself unjustly punished, a bitter hostility against mankind took possession of him. Mentally and morally ignorant, he had no idea of patient submission ; but, though his floggings were innumerable, punishment had no effect on him. Harshness could neither bend nor break his spirit ; and kindness was never dreamt of. Sent to Goat Island (an insulated rock in Sydney harbour), the poor fellow was sentenced for some offence to wear irons for a whole twelvemonth—a period which he completed, but not till his back had been gashed by twelve hundred lashes. At length, for new offences, some very trivial—such as looking round from his work, and some very natural—such as attempting to escape, he was sentenced, after receiving in all three hundred lashes, to be chained to a rock for two years. To it the wretched man was fastened by his waist with a chain twenty-six feet long ; with irons on his legs, and barely a rag to cover him. His only bed was a hollow scooped out in the rock ; and he had no other shelter than a wooden lid perforated with holes, which was locked at night and removed in the morning. Had he been, not a man, but a wild beast, he could not have been worse treated ; the vessel containing his food was pushed towards him by

means of a pole ; and though people who passed in boats occasionally threw him pieces of bread or biscuit, no person was permitted to approach or speak to him. Without clothing on his back or shoulders, which were raw with the sores of repeated floggings, maggots, rapidly engendered in a hot climate, fed upon his flesh ; and, denied water to bathe his wounds, when rain fell he would lie and roll in it in his agony. At length Anderson was sent to Norfolk Island to work in chains for life. On his arrival, Captain Maconochie found him there with the worst of characters for insolence, for violence, and insubordination ; looking, though only twenty-four, as if he were forty years old. With boundless faith in the power of wise, firm, but kind and Christian treatment, Captain Maconochie set himself to reclaim this wretched and wicked creature. I cannot dwell on the details ; but step by step the poor fellow rose from the condition of a beast to the heart and bearing of a man. Being at length put in charge of a signal station on Mount Pitt, the highest point on the island, Anderson's delight was extreme. He, who had been chained like some wild monster to a lonely sea-rock, felt himself a man again ; and, dressed in sailor costume, he soon regained the bearing of a man-of-war's man. A desperado once, now tamed, subdued, "clothed and in his right mind," he was to be seen cultivating flowers in his patch of garden, where the best potatoes on the island were grown, and whence many a freshly-dug basketful was, in token of gratitude, carried to Captain Maconochie's house. "What smart little fellow may that be?" asked

Sir George Gipps, pointing, as they drove through the beautiful scenery, to a man who was tripping along in trim sailor dress, full of importance, with a telescope under his arm. "Who do you suppose?" replied the Captain; "that is the man who was chained to the rock in Sydney Harbour." "Bless my soul, you do not mean to say so!" was the astonished rejoinder. It was Anderson.

One can fancy they hear God saying, as He bends over him, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found;" and adding, as He points us to this noble triumph of wisdom and Christian kindness—to the wanderer brought home, the lost one saved—"Go thou and do likewise." The soul of the lowest criminal is as precious and immortal as our own. It was bought at the same price, and redeemed on the same Cross; and as God instructed the Israelites to be kind to strangers because they themselves had been strangers in the land of Egypt, besides humbling our pride, it should awaken our sympathy on behalf of "convicts," to reflect that we all are convicts by the law, and in the sight of God. "Judgment"—I quote the words of inspiration—"has come on all men to condemnation,"—"death has passed on all men, for that all have sinned." The long-suffering and mercy we ask God to extend to us, it surely becomes us to show to others. Only to hang, banish, and imprison convicts, ill becomes those who have sinned more against God's laws and love than the worst convicts have sinned against theirs. The best of us are monuments of long-suffering mercy; and other

grounds of hope have none but these : "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth : who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh **intercession for us.**"

SKETCHES OF THE COWGATE.

VI.—EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS.



SHORT while after I had published my "Plea for Ragged Schools ;" or, "The City, its Sins and Sorrows," a person with the appearance and manners of a lady was introduced into my study. I could not recollect having seen her before, or even heard the name which the servant, who ushered her in, announced. When we have many visitors, one knocks the other out of mind, like the tow balls of the boys' wooden guns. So motioning her to a chair, I began with the usual apology, in case I had forgotten her, and added, plunging at once *in medias res*, " May I request to know your business ? "

" You don't know me, sir ; but I have read your book. I also take an interest in the condition of the poor."

Flattering myself that she had come as a volunteer, to offer the aid of her personal services, or out of the folds of her silken robes to draw a long purse wherewith to oil the wheels of our machinery, I laid down my pen, and

with it some feeling of chagrin at being interrupted in my work, saying,

“I am delighted to hear it, and glad to find any who do ; for, like the Jews of old, the great mass ‘drink wine in bowls, and dance to the sound of the tabret and viol, and are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph.’ ”

“Well,” she said, “I have come to ask you a question.”

Was that all? My expectations dropped like the mercury before a storm ; and I began again to finger my pen, dreading a waste of time ; for, on taking a sharper look at my visitor, I thought she looked rather senseless, forward and fantastic too. However, I professed myself ready to answer her question to the best of my ability.

Whereupon, smoothing down her dress, she drew herself up, and looked into my face with a queer expression in her own—a sort of simpering, incredulous smile. I wondered what was coming ; and when it came, was, for a moment, taken as much aback as I ever was in my life.

“You don’t mean to say,” she said, “that those stories you have put into your book, about the poor, their vices and their misery, are true, do you ? ”

The idea of a lady coming into a minister’s study, and, looking him full in the face to say in effect, Now confess that you have been throwing dust in the eyes of the public, and playing on their credulity, was so ludicrous that it was impossible to be angry. Such barefaced impertinence rather amused me than otherwise ; and I could only preserve my gravity by thinking of the gross

ignorance it betrayed of something more important than rules of politeness, and of the sad consequences such ignorance in those who could give help entails on those who need it. This was a serious and sickening thought. So instead of answering "a fool according to her folly," by laughing at her impudence, or walking her to the door, I advised my visitor to spend a forenoon visiting some of the Closes of the Cowgate; telling her what I tell my readers, that no statement I have ever made, or ever read as made by others, no picture painted with the most graphic touches and strongest colours, conveys any adequate idea of the deplorable, degraded, and desperate condition of thousands who perish at our very doors,—in the Cowgates, St. Giles's, and Gallowgates of our large towns.

Instead of entering into details—always painful and often disgusting—descriptive of their abject poverty, their appalling wretchedness, their gross ignorance, their immoral and irreligious habits, we shall be better employed in tracing these to their causes. Let us get at the root of the evil, and there is hope of stopping it—a few well-directed blows of the knife there being better bestowed than any hewing or hacking of the branches. Tracing these evils to their source, and describing also the remedial agencies by which they may be met, and have been so in instances not a few with triumphant success, I may hope that a goodly number of my readers will engage in the work; saving others from ruin and themselves from the curse—"Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not

to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

It is not to one but many sources we are to attribute the sins and sorrows of our cities, and the ungodly, degraded condition into which many of their inhabitants have sunk.

One of these lies in the entire separation of the higher and lower, the wealthier and poorer classes.

As if the different orders were mutually repellant, the upper classes now-a-days reside in one district; the middle in another; our tradesmen and artisans in a third; our common labourers in a fourth; while the lowest and lapsed classes have their own quarters, where they are crowded together to rot the faster, like heaps of manure. How different, and much more favourable to the general good, the state of matters in Edinburgh and our other large towns a century ago! One roof covered people of many ranks. Peer, lawyer, divine, merchant, mechanic, labourer, all entered by the same door; one stair leading to different storeys, being common to their families; one *close* mouth at least opening on their different houses. Daily meeting, they were familiar with each other's faces; and came to know more or less of each other's history; and take an interest in each other's welfare. Their circumstances were such that the good acted as a restraint on the bad; and while the devout and decent, like salt, checked the progress of corruption, they produced by their presence such an assimilating effect on the mass around them as did the leaven which the woman hid in the three measures of meal.

This happy mingling together of different classes is still common in many continental cities. In Rome for example, where we resided in the Via Babuino,—the favourite quarter of the English,—we had a dairy and a barber's shop opposite our lodgings ; a baker sold bread on one side of the door, and on the other the shops of one or two picture-dealers separated us from the palazzo of an Italian prince, at whose gate might be seen at any time the gorgeous equipages of Roman nobles, and the coaches of cardinals, distinguished by the large red umbrella, the insignium of their office, that lay a-top the carriage. In Naples, our house in the Riviera di Chiaia brought us into still closer proximity with high life. One roof covered us and a ducal family—the noble occupying the two upper stories of the house, and we the one below him and above the shops.

“Be ye courteous,” says the Apostle ; and the courteousness which, exalted by him into a Christian duty, characterises those nations of the Continent that, though our inferiors in morals and religion, are so much superior to us in polish and politeness, is one good effect produced by the mingling together of the different classes of society. But that is calculated to produce still more important results. To illustrate this, let me take a house in Paris, as I knew it nearly forty years ago. The two lower stories were occupied by a family belonging to the French *noblesse*, while the tenant of the third was a banker, at whose house I was in the habit of visiting. The apartment of the upper floor, right above my friend's *salon*, was occupied by a cobbler, the sound of whose

busy hammer, though dulled, was distinctly audible below. Now suppose that the cobbler, who probably lived, like most of his craft, from hand to mouth, had been seized with fever. The silent hammer would have proclaimed the misfortune, awakening attention and leading to inquiry ; and the result had been that my friend, the banker, would have taken an interest in the case of his honest but suffering neighbour, and found some way or other of supplying the wants of the family till the head of it had been able to resume work. But let a similar case happen in the Cowgate, or any such locality ; and see the result ! John Thomson, a sober, decent, industrious shoemaker, who, like a wise and virtuous man, has married in early life, is struck down by fever. He can do nothing now to maintain his wife and children. And what can his neighbours do for him ?—all being as poor, and some indeed poorer than himself. None, it is true, are so kind to the poor as the poor ; making sacrifices for each other which put to shame those who look down on them. How often have I known instances of their watching, after a hard day's work, through the live-long night by the bed of a suffering neighbour ? People whose charity never seriously interferes with their daily comforts, think they do well when doling out a shilling, half-a-crown, or the double of it, to help a distressed family. But God's balances weigh differently from ours ; and the humble washerwoman, for instance, who gives nothing save a night's watching, but, giving that, unfits herself for the next day's work and forfeits its wages, is, in relation to her means and circumstances, a more mag-

nificent donor. So far, however, as money is concerned, Thomson's neighbours are able to give little or no help. They have enough to do to keep their own heads above water ; and in these circumstances, the pawn-shop, where money can be borrowed on clothes and articles of furniture, offers the readiest way of filling hungry mouths—feeding the children who cry for bread, and the mother who has none to give them. So long as the cobbler lies on a sick bed, his Sunday dress can be dispensed with. So it goes first to pawn ; and for some days the money borrowed on it keeps the wolf from the door. The small library of the poor man goes next—all except his Bible, an article reserved to the last extremity ; then, perhaps, the clock goes ; and, to the appeal of cheeks that have lost their roses, and hollow, hungry eyes, one article of furniture after another,—for mouths must be fed and cries stilled—till the room is clean dismantled.

By this time Thomson has recovered from his illness ; and, though with impaired strength, sits down to resume work. One by one the articles are redeemed : and in the order of their necessity for household comforts, convenience, and economy—first the blankets and bed-clothes are taken out of pawn ; then the wife's gown ; the children's shoes : the furniture—chairs and tables, pots and pans. But this occupies long months ; and before the Sunday clothes, the last to be taken out, are redeemed, a period has elapsed long enough to change the habits, and with them the destiny, of this unfortunate man. “ The first Sabbath,” said one to me, talking with him on this subject, “ I remained at home, I felt very

uncomfortable ; the second was less disagreeable ; I felt pretty much at ease on the third ; and by the fourth, fifth, or sixth Sunday I got quite accustomed to it." So sinks Thomson into the condition of a non-church-goer. Before his Sabbath clothes are redeemed, his Sabbath habits are lost. Nor is that all. At first, ashamed to be seen, he keeps his room while others worship in the house of God ; but Sunday time hangs heavy on his hands, and by-and-by, he seeks the companionship of the non-church-goers around him. Drink is called in to enliven the dull hours. Ere long the debauches of Sunday are commenced on Saturday night, and continued on through Monday. Peace flies the household. Hatred, bickerings, and mutual **recriminations** take the place of domestic happiness. His children get ragged ; and, ceasing to go to school, are initiated into vice on the **streets**. His wife, once a bright, tidy, frugal, industrious woman, grows a broken-down, dirty slattern ; and at length she also, who long had tried by all the kind, winning arts of woman to stem the tide and reclaim her infatuated husband, loses heart, and in downright desperation flies to the bottle. Now a fire is lighted, the funereal pile of all domestic peace, happiness, goodness, and virtue, around which devils may dance. The sin and misery which follow may be seen in yonder room, five storeys high in the Lawnmarket, where a father and mother sit by a fireless hearth, besotted ; in brutal indifference to the state of the emaciated, ragged children around them ; of their eldest girl lost, walking the streets ; of their eldest son lying there in the last stage of con-

sumption on a pallet of straw, from which, with cruel hands, they had plucked the very blankets we had given for a covering to his wasted form—selling them for accursed drink.

May God confound the counsels of such as, caring no more for the poor than Judas, seek—either for their own pleasures or from the sordid desire for wealth—to undermine the church-going habits of our people. Look at these unwashed, haggard, sloppy, slobbering, half-besotted men who are to be seen in numbers wandering our streets each Monday! Were they at church the day before? Do they belong to the class of Sabbatarians, as some are reproachfully called? In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, those who worship on the Sabbath work on the Monday; and they who spend the latter day in idleness and dissipation neglect the assembling of themselves together. Even those who, to excuse their own lax conduct, ridicule the advocates of hallowed Sabbaths, know perfectly well that such as give up attendance on the house of God are on the road to ruin. For were they required to fill an office of great pecuniary trust, I venture to say, that they would appoint one who kept holy the Lord's day rather than one who was known to spend it in worldly business or amusements.

But to return to the subject more immediately on hand: the habits of many are, as is illustrated by the case of the cobbler, due more to their misfortunes than to their crimes. In consequence of the separation of the wealthy from the poor—of those who could have

given help from those who needed it, they were left to sink under their misfortunes. There was none to push a plank to the drowning man : to lend a hand ; in his time of need to prove a friend indeed—while no such providential circumstance occurred in their history as in that of one I knew ; and which was as follows. Late on a Saturday evening I recollected having visited a few days before the house of a widow whom I found struggling, by the sale of whiting, vegetables, and such things, to maintain herself and four young children. Though I could not have assigned any particular reason for it, I became very urgent, while recommending my wife to carry her custom to that shop, that she should send the servant that very night to buy some things. Unreasonable as this haste seemed, the servant was accordingly despatched ; nor was she long in returning—the kind heart of the honest country lass, who had never seen cruel want before, melting with pity. She had found the room, which was both house and shop, without a morsel of food—neither a cabbage-head nor a handful of meal for the Lord's day. The mother was sitting with the infant on her arm, and the other children cowering at her knee, crying in bitter, helpless sorrow. They had not tasted food from the morning. What a Sabbath was in prospect ? Of course supplies were instantly provided. Not only so, but steps were taken to set them on their feet ; and the case turned out one to keep up hands that were ready to hang down amid many sad discouragements. One needs to be cheered with success now and then. The widow earned her bread with

patient, honest industry ; though they had a hard fight for it, the children got a fair education : and I have lived to enjoy the pleasure of seeing all that family grow up to be well-to-do men and women, who dutifully returned their mother's kindness ; and tenderly watching by her death-bed, closed her eyes when she died in the peace of the faith. That Saturday night was the crisis of this widow's history. But for the seasonable and providential supply thrown into her house, her Sabbath attire, as in other cases, would most probably have gone into pawn ; and that—like the letting out of waters—might have proved, as it has done in a thousand other instances, the beginning of the end, the *facilis descensus in Averno*.

The evils which arise in our large towns from the almost entire separation of the different classes of society, are not to be remedied by restoring matters to their old condition. That is impossible. "Birds of a feather," says the old proverb, "flock together:" and ever since their old city walls have been cast down, and the inhabitants are no longer locked up at night within gates and bars, the general mass has exhibited a tendency to separate into its individual parts—the different classes herding together ; the highest and lowest living far apart. But love and Christian kindness have provided a remedy for evils which it is beyond the power of law to cure. I shall show that to my readers—and how much may be done, through churches and Christian organizations, to apply the wealth and piety of the better-conditioned classes to the elevation of those which have sunk into poverty and crime ; and how by this

means, as by the channels that convey a living stream from fountain, lake, or river to irrigate and fertilise barren fields, the wilderness, to use the beautiful language of Scripture, is become an Eden, and the desert a garden of the Lord. We have such gardens, as I shall show, in the Cowgate and elsewhere—green and beautiful as the oasis of a desert.

Thus those whom God has made of one flesh and blood, though living apart, have been brought together to the benefit of both ; and to the getting rid of prejudices which go unfortunately to widen the gulf that separate them. We have mingled with both classes, the highest and the lowest ; and are persuaded that, if they knew each other better, they would respect each other more. It is by no means uncommon to find people in the upper ranks who fancy that the lower classes regard them with envy, and are seeking to rise on their ruins ; at least to drag them down to the same low level with themselves. Thanks to a gracious God, no such feelings embitter the bread of labour. The sons of toil commonly accept their lot without a grudge ; and with the ruddy light of a humble hearth gleaming in the bright, laughing eyes of their domestic circle, are as content with their condition as the greatest and proudest in the land.

People who fancy that the working-classes must envy them the possession of their luxuries—those tables, servants, carriages, and state which it would make them miserable to be deprived of—forget that what man never had, he never misses ; and that God has imparted such

pleasure to the use of our faculties—be they those of the body or of the mind—to a life of labour, in fact, that many of the upper classes, flying from *ennui* and idleness, undergo harder work to find amusement than most working-men to find bread. I have seen a stalwart ploughman at the close of day, standing by his cottage door beneath a bower of roses and honeysuckle, while he dandled a crowing, laughing infant in his arms, stop his happy play for a moment to gaze at the gay equipage that swept by. But only for a moment. The summer-dust had not settled on the road, the spokes were still flashing in sight, the clatter of hoofs and sound of wheels were still heard, when the rustic Hercules, with health on his ruddy cheek and sun-browned brow, without an envious look cast on wealth or rank, resumed his play, and made the welkin ring with light-hearted laughter. No doubt there are dark and malignant spirits everywhere ; but if the working-classes have a fault, it is that, wherever a due regard is shown to their feelings and a proper interest taken in their welfare by those above them, they are too ready to worship them—furnishing an illustration of the old proverb, “The king’s chaff is better than other people’s corn.”

Then, again, the humbler classes have only to know the higher better to know that they have their full share of kindly and human sympathy ; and that the upper regions of society resemble not those cold, naked, and barren heights where no sweet flowers grow, nor sparkling fountains spring, nor creatures live but birds of prey, that descend from their rocky nests to ravage the plains below.

When expatiating amid a circle of the highest rank on the worth of many of the humbler classes, or telling some story illustrative of their sufferings and sorrows, I have ever found ready listeners, and seen tears of kindest sympathy standing in eyes that some would persuade the poor regard them only with scorn and contempt. "Scratch a Russian," said Napoleon I., "and you will find a Tartar below." My experience is, that you have only to get through the outer crust and shell to find in all ranks those God-implanted feelings of humanity and brotherhood which, in circumstances favourable to their action, would draw the different classes of society into closer, kinder proximity. There is great need for this. Would the wealthy, the worthy, the well-conditioned, personally visit the degraded districts of our towns, they would, after all I and others have said of city sins and sorrows, return to use, though in a quite different sense from hers, the words of the Queen of Sheba, "The half was not told me." Let them but venture down into the pit, and their hearts would be so touched with the scenes of misery and wretchedness amid which they found themselves, that they themselves would be miserable till they were remedied—until at least in their exertions to heal the wounds under which humanity lay bleeding, they earned the praise of Him who said, "She hath done what she could."

Another cause lies in the neglect of their wants and interests.

At the period of the Reformation in Scotland, John Knox proposed a division of the property of the Church

of Rome so remarkable for its piety and patriotism, as to entitle that much-abused man to be regarded as the greatest of the Reformers. He regarded the property as sacred to the public good ; and proposed to divide into four equal parts what the country needed, but rapacious nobles devoured—one to go to the support of the poor ; another to form livings for the ministers of the Gospel ; the third to maintain the fabrics of schools and churches ; and the remaining fourth to provide salaries for teachers in parish schools, rectors of grammar schools in the chief towns of the provinces, and professors in the four Universities. Along with his large and enlightened views on the subject of education, Knox held that no man had a right to live in society and rear his children in savage ignorance ; but should be compelled, if neglecting the duty he owed both to his family and the community, to send his children to school. But his noble aspirations and wise plans for the Church and country were, so far as this scheme was concerned, frustrated. The Crown, and Lords, and *Lairds* seized the spoil ; all that the ministers of religion obtained being a grudging and wretched pittance ; while it was only after a struggle, extending over more than a century, that they succeeded in establishing those parish schools which have been the boast of Scotland, and the best inheritance of her children. It would have been vain, either in Scotland or in England, to even attempt what the Dutch accomplished in Holland, where they made provision that the number of ministers and of churches should increase *pari passu* with the population. This arrangement reflects much

credit on the sagacity of the Dutch. No such provision being made, nor in the circumstances of the case being possible in our country, when the population of many of our parishes, with the increase of trade and the improvements of agriculture, increased to double, triple, quadruple its original amount, the one parish church became little else than a mockery. Unable to accommodate perhaps a fifth or a tenth of the population, it illustrated the graphic words of Scripture, "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."

The pastor who could have managed a flock numbering one or two thousand, found himself in some instances minister of a parish with twice, ten, or twenty times as many; and fifty years, or a century ago, it was but little that voluntary efforts, either within or without the Established Church, did to remedy the evil. Some ministers of overgrown parishes, strange to say, were silly enough to boast of the number of their parishioners; while others who felt their responsibility, were paralysed under a sense of their impracticable, and indeed impossible duties. Set a man to empty a pool, and he will go vigorously to work. Give him an impracticable task, require him to empty a lake or sea, and after a few efforts he probably abandons the attempt in despair, and either sits down to fold his hands in absolute idleness, or betakes himself in search of happiness to other pursuits. Nothing indeed can altogether excuse the carelessness of many of the ministers in Edinburgh some century ago. It appears, from Carlyle's Memoirs, that they spent their days in the

cultivation of literature, and their evenings in taverns, drinking claret ; meanwhile their flocks wandered as sheep without a shepherd ; and it was little they did, or attempted to provide for the wants of the population, and stem the tide of vice, wretchedness, and irreligion, which was rising to engulf huge districts and large masses of the people.

The evils arising from an increase of population, for which no adequate provision was made, were greatly aggravated to the humbler classes of society by the introduction of a system that turned the name of "parish church" into a mockery, and the appointment of a popular minister into a positive calamity to the parishioners. Strange to say, the more devout and able the minister, so much the worse for the poor. A result which happened thus. The members of the municipal corporation in whose hands the property and patronage were invested, wanted money for some object—good or bad. For this purpose, when a clergyman of popular gifts was appointed to one of the city churches, they put on a screw in the shape of high seat-rents ; thereby excluding the poor from their own parish church—which got filled by the wealthy from other quarters. The humbler and poorer classes, driven from their place of worship, sank into careless and irreligious habits ; while the clergyman, having his hands fully occupied with the work of a congregation drawn from all quarters of the city, had little or no time to bestow on his parishioners. The interests of the poor, for whom the benefits of an Establishment were chiefly intended, were sacrificed to the tastes of the rich, and the pecuniary embarrassments of ill-managed municipali-

ties. Mammon sat enthroned within the house of God—ruling with a high hand. The poor did not so much break away, as they were cut adrift, from the Church and the ordinances of divine worship ; and who will not say that they, in these circumstances, were less sinners in the sight of God than those, whether patrons or pastors, who, treating them with neglect and robbing them of their birthrights, as the Bible says of the Kings of Israel, “ made them to sin.”

For this evil also, as I shall show, our age has provided a suitable and most successful remedy. I refer to those Home Missionary schemes which, selecting a manageable section in these dark and dreary districts, plant there a school with its teacher and a church with its minister and staff of agents—saying to them, This is your sphere : work this field ; by assiduous care, and the omnipotence of Christian love, “ compel them to come in.” The success of this instrumentality has surpassed the fondest expectations ; and than the reports of these Missions, no accounts more cheering come from heathen lands and the isles that are afar off.

Another, and indeed chief, cause lies in Drunkenness.

The simple absence of good influences, like a want of showers and sunshine to the soil, will account for many of our evils ; but, like the bitter waters that reduced the plain of Jericho to barrenness, drunkenness, which assumes its most hideous form where ardent spirits are the favourite stimulant, is the main cause of the social, moral, and physical evils of our country. But for this vice, how high we could hold our heads before those nations of the

Continent, among whom, notwithstanding their sobriety, licentiousness prevails to an extent happily unknown even in the least virtuous districts of our country. I know that some, from antipathy to our religious fervour and hallowed Sabbaths, represent us as being, in the observance of the seventh Commandment of the Decalogue, no better, and rather worse, than the French, Germans, and Italians. We have elsewhere brought this matter to the test of statistics so far as France is concerned, and proved it to be a vile and groundless libel. Our country comes as honourably out of a comparison with Italy, as I ascertained during a visit paid to that country last spring. The "*Sage femme qui prend des Pensionnaires*" which one reads everywhere on the streets of France, does not tell a plainer tale than those establishments which, in the form of Foundling Hospitals, provide secrecy and safety to vice; and disgraceful as are the scenes our streets present, I regard them as less dangerous to good morals, and as presenting a less unfavourable symptom of the social condition of a country, than such institutions as I saw in Italy. Here is a vast pile of building; and who watches in its neighbourhood by night may see a female form approaching with muffled face, and in her arms something which she conceals by the folds of her cloak. Stealing along under the shadow of the lofty houses, she reaches the steps that lead up to a vast, open porch. She quickly crosses it; making, not for either of the two doors that admit into the inside of the building, but to a niche in the wall between them. An open box, which turns on a pivot, stands there, and a bell-rope hangs close

by. She stops at the curious niche, and unfolds the cloak. There is an infant on her arm. She bends over it for a moment, and kisses it; while some tears fall on its sleeping face. Now, pressing it once more to her bosom, she lays it in the box; seizes the rope; rings the bell; and the little machine, turning round, carries the poor infant inside, and leaves her without, to return to a life of vice and habits which such arrangements enable her to practise with impunity—protected from the sorrow, shame, and burdens that God ordained to be the penalties and checks of crime.

A means this, as a Neapolitan gentleman told me, of preventing infanticide, in which the remedy is worse than the disease. There were fewer cases of child-murder in this island were our judges and juries to execute justice on the perpetrators of a crime so monstrous. Still, better a few children were murdered than the morals of the country be undermined by establishing and endowing Foundling Hospitals. It is a false benevolence. Let us shield those who are innocently involved in the consequences of others' guilt; but it is not wise or well to save the guilty from suffering. Pain is the divinely appointed guardian as well of our morals as of our health and life; and we cannot afford to remove any of the fences that protect the virtue of society. Let us remove every impediment from the path of virtue, but none from that of vice. There is little need to make the descent easier and more inviting. Alas! when the road is roughest "many there be that find it." What inducement have we to assimilate our institutions to those of other nations?

None—the result of my inquiries being that we can hold up our heads unblushingly in presence of Italians as of French, so far as moral purity is concerned, and especially that conjugal fidelity for which—notwithstanding the cases in our Divorce Courts and those details which many of our newspapers disgrace themselves by publishing—our country stands pre-eminent, and thereby stands secure against all assailants. A faithful observance of the marriage “League and Covenant” is eminently calculated to form a great people; and, all thanks to God, the greatness, peace, and prosperity of Britain afford happy evidence of the truth of the saying, “The hearthstone is the best foundation of society!”

But on turning to the vice of drunkenness, to use the words of Ezra, “We blush, and are ashamed to lift up the head.” Whatever may have been the case once, now, happily, it does not pervade all classes of society—our middle and upper classes being almost as sober as those of the Continent. But there are large masses of our labouring population, especially in its best-paid and also in its lowest grades, that are the slaves of this most degrading, and abominable, yet betwitching vice. For example, during a visit of nearly three months paid to the Continent in spring, I was in Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, Rome, Naples, Florence, Bologna, Turin, Macon—all large towns: and on my return, I saw in Edinburgh, as I would have seen in London or Liverpool, more drunken people in three days than I encountered on the Continent during these ten or eleven weeks. Sad and shameful as this is, it is due to our

country and its religion to say, that all the drunkards I saw belonged to the lowest class in the community. Nothing were more unfair than to have regarded them as types of the nation—the case being one where the adage was quite inapplicable, *Ex uno disce omnes!*

Now, nowhere is this debauched and drunken class to be found in such numbers as in the dark, dingy, godless quarters of our large towns. Into these they sink like mud. They crowd together in houses often foul as pig-styes—squalid and sickly; rags on their backs; sometimes fierce passions, but usually hopeless degradation, in their looks. The parents go to no church; the hapless children are sent to no school. There is generally no Bible in their houses, frequently no bed. “Dark places of the earth” indeed “they are, full of cruelty”—the health, the morals, the very lives of thousands of poor, innocent children being as certainly sacrificed year by year to parental vices as, in the days of old, they were sacrificed to parental superstition who were cast into the fires of Moloch. These are the quarters that contribute most deaths to swell the bills of mortality; and although I sympathise with every attempt to improve their dwellings, and have almost sometimes wished for a good roaring fire to clear away the courts, closes, and alleys where improvement seems impossible, the great mortality of children among this class is due, less to the want of a sufficient supply of good air, than to the drunkenness of mothers who poison the milk in their breasts, and of fathers who waste the wages that should procure for their children food and clothing—comforts

indispensable to their health and lives. 'Tis not the love of money, but of drink, that may be called "the root of all evil" in such quarters. And alas for those poor wretches, who, if not lost to all sense of shame, have lost all power of resistance! Drinking-shops, licensed by our magistrates and justices, beset them behind and before. They cannot repair to their daily work, they cannot travel ten yards along the street, without being exposed to temptations which many are as incapable of resisting as a piece of iron is the attraction of a magnet. These shops, with their open doors, and flaring gas, and rubicund, wily keepers, who fatten like bloated spiders on the heedless flies entangled in their nets, are the sign as well as the cause of poverty and degradation. Planted thickest where they should be thinnest, they abound most where poverty most abounds. This most cruel and unjust treatment of our poor people has almost defeated every effort which Christian men and women have made to reform their habits and raise them out of the "Slough of Despond." Let a man set himself to improve their dwellings, to exchange their rags for decent attire, to send their children to school, to train them to habits of providence through savings banks or friendly societies, to bring them out of their dark houses to the house of God, and whatever be the path of Christian benevolence he selects, the demon of drink starts up to bestride it, to bar his way, to neutralise his efforts, to disappoint his dearest hopes, and make him almost sit down despairingly—to cry with the prophet, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain."

tain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people !”

When labouring, which I did for nearly seven years, among these classes, I saw so clearly that drink stood as the great impediment in the way of doing them good, that, to induce them to abandon it, I myself became a total abstainer. I hoped my precepts would have more weight when they were backed by my example. And almost all, whether men or women, who have devoted themselves to the improvement of such districts—a very self-denying work—have found it indispensable to follow the same course. Many have entered on the duties of home or city missionaries without being total abstainers ; but—and this is a remarkable fact—few of them have passed six months at the work till they found it absolutely necessary, if they were to do **any** good, to preach, and, offering themselves as patterns, to practise total abstinence. That fact speaks volumes. We do not believe in total abstinence as a substitute for the Gospel ; but we do believe that drinking-habits, like the tombstone at the grave of Lazarus, stand an all but insuperable barrier between the living and the dead ; and must be removed before we can entertain the hope that their victims will hear or obey the voice which addresses the dead—saying, “ Come forth !”

Another cause lies in the irruption of floods of low Roman Catholic Irish.

These form about one-fourth of the population of Glasgow, a sixth or so of that of Liverpool,* and a for-

* At the Liverpool Borough Jail there is a Roman Catholic chaplain. He says :—“ In reference to the total number of commitments

midable proportion of the inhabitants of all our manufacturing towns. Nor are they "hewers of wood and drawers of water" in these only; but are spreading, like a moral plague, over many of our rural districts.

"To buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market," without regard to other considerations, is the Gospel according to the World. To such political economy we hesitate not to prefer the maxims of God's Word, and the principles of One who said, "The faithful of the land, he shall serve me,"—"I will not suffer a wicked person,"—"He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." What has resulted from buying human labour in the cheapest market without any regard to the moral and religious interests of the country? Our manufacturers and even farmers have encouraged hordes of Irish Papists to settle among us; and we are discovering, when too late, that their cheap labour will prove dear in the end. Thousands of our sober, virtuous, well-conditioned working-classes, whose wages would have risen but for the supply of cheap labour which Ireland threw into the market, have betaken themselves to the Colonies; and in their place—a bad and costly exchange—we have got an ignorant, rude, bigoted race, who flutter in rags, lodge

for the year, it will be found that 3,083 Roman Catholic females were committed against 1,812 Protestants, thus giving a majority of 1,271. The number of Catholic prostitutes is so great, and the means of helping those who wish to abandon the streets so limited, that I give the numbers in full." From the figures given by the reverend gentleman, it appears that, in the months from January to September, 605 Protestants and 921 Romanists of the class in question were committed.

in hovels, and, worst of all, having their eyes and ears shut by their priests, remain impervious to those improving influences which, with their undoubted cleverness and emotional nature, would convert the Irish into valuable members of society. They have suffered such centuries of cruel wrong, that we should not be astonished at their hatred of the Saxon ; and that they entertain, more almost than any other Roman Catholic people, the bitterest prejudice against the Protestant faith. But, however we may thus in fairness account for, and in charity excuse, their hostilities and habits, their cheap labour has been no boon, and their presence among us no blessing to the country. As we could prove by statistics, they have added enormously to our poor rates, and form a comparatively large proportion of our criminals ; while, like the foul stream which pollutes the pool it enters, they have lowered the habits of our people, wherever they have happened to mingle.

It is due to the Irish Roman Catholics to say, that personally I have no reason to say a word against them. As minister first of the parish of Old Greyfriars, and afterwards of St. John's, I received all reasonable courtesy at their hands—save on only two occasions. In the one case, I was seated on a stool in the humble apartment of an old rickety house, noting down the names of the children as I got them from their mother, when the door of a closet burst open, and out bounced a man, her husband, without his coat. Striding across the floor, with fists clenched and eyes on fire, he planted himself before me, saying in an unmistakeable brogue, “ You begone—out w y^e —I’ll

have none of you Protestants—out, away wi' ye ! ” So he raged and foamed. I rose ; and being satisfied that, seeing my presence was not “ contemptible ” like Paul's, he would use no violence, still less attempt to toss me out at the window, I told him to take it easy ; that I would go, but there was no occasion for such hot haste—and so resumed my seat, resolved, if possible, to mollify this raging lion. Poor fellow, it was not ill to do—he proving, like most of his countrymen, very open to kindness. The Apostle Paul won people by guile ; and I thought it worth while to try whether I could not win over my antagonist, and get into his good graces by help of the potato. So I started the subject, and healed the breach ; or, rather, made an opening into his heart ; and once in, embraced the opportunity to drop some seeds of divine truth, which I left God to bless.

The other case was an encounter I had with a woman, whom her own country people pronounced a *red-hot Catholic*. She flew at me like a wild cat, and with a bearing of uncommon insolence, challenged me again and again to a theological discussion. She was in no temper to be convinced, far less converted ; and though, for her ignorance was on a par with her insolence, a victory might have been easily won, I felt that there would have been little glory, and less good, in putting her *hors de combat* ; and therefore declined to lift her gage of battle. Very probably I would have found my antagonist, and the other Irish who were present, incapable of appreciating the weight of reasons ; most of them being satisfied with the silly arguments in favour of Popery

they learn from their priests. With one of these she kept hammering away at me—this, namely, Is the father, or the grandfather, the better man? She meant, of course, that Popery, for which she claimed the relation of grandfather, was the old, original, and true faith; and I did not think it worth while to answer this—a fair specimen of the arguments which the priests throw, as dust, in the eyes of the people—beyond quietly saying, as I left the house, “My good friend, keep your temper; there is no question which is the better man: the question is, to take your way of putting it, which is the father, and which the grandfather? Your Popery is a comparatively modern invention. The doctrines of Protestantism are as old as the Bible, and were, as you should find if you would only read it, those of the Church of God, long centuries before there was Pope or Papist on earth.” The absolute trash which, as arguments for Popery, passes current among these poor people, is almost incredible, and were ludicrous if their consequences were not melancholy—as for example:—

“Your riverence” (for this term they bestow on Protestant ministers, heretics though they are taught to consider them), said a denizen of the Grassmarket, “I will not change—not I.”

“Why?”

“Bekase mine is the thruly Scriptural religion.”

“How, friend, do you prove that?—a very extraordinary assertion to come from you, a Roman Catholic.”

“Bekase, your riverince, don’t you see it must be so;

since there is an Epistle in the Bible to the Romans, but none to the Presbatairians!"

It was, I may remark, more the old Popery the Irish brought with them, than the influence of the priests, which made the Roman Catholic element in the Cowgate a difficult one to deal with, when I laboured there. It is alleged that the Romish priests take more pains to seduce silly women from the faith than to minister to the wants and improve the habits of the poor and low among their own followers. And, so far as my experience goes, perhaps I ought to believe it; seeing that during the seven years I visited the Cowgate and its neighbourhood—where there were many Papists—I never met or saw a priest, by day or night, in court, close, or alley, ministering either to the spiritual or temporal wants of the poor. Other duties may possibly have occupied them. Any way, let us not blame the men, but blame, and hate, and uproot a system, the natural effect of which is to dehumanise its priests, destroy the domestic and kindlier affections of their nature, and make the Church, as they call it, father, mother, brother, sister, child, lover, friend, country, all in all to them.

Roused to activity by the great, and, as I shall show, successful efforts which have been made to evangelize our dark and destitute districts, the priests of Rome may probably now-a-days be oftener met in the Cowgate and its neighbourhood. Perhaps they have taken such alarm as they did in the matter of Ragged Schools. Till Protestants bestirred themselves on behalf of the neglected outcasts of our streets, Rome left her children to igno-

rance, beggary, and misery ; nor did her priests take any steps to set up a Ragged School in the land till there was a chance of the poor Roman Catholic children getting God's unadulterated truth at those which Protestants had established.

It is, I may remark, to the revived activity of the Popish Church, as well as to the great influx of an Irish population, that we are chiefly to attribute her boasted increase of chapels and convents, priests, monks, and nuns. Popery, in fact, is more a difficulty than a danger—a disease which it is difficult to cure more than one which there is much reason to fear will take the form of an epidemic, and spread. How the doom of Babylon is to be accomplished is known to Him who has foretold, and will accomplish it. But no great change is likely to be effected on her by influences from without. What State or Church was ever either reformed or overthrown but by movements that began within her own bosom?—controversies and the attacks of foreign assailants seeming only in most cases to confirm and rivet men in error. The priests of Rome, though they appear unable to elevate the habits of their people, have sufficient influence over them to shut their eyes and ears against the truth ; so that, unless God interfere in some extraordinary way, I have small hope of anything that we can do telling on her adult population. As is proved by the United States of America, where Popery would have been almost extinguished but for the large annual emigration of Roman Catholics from Ireland, it is by the education of the young that we are to drive a wedge into the mass.

and rend it asunder. Since 1833 the Legislature has affirmed in fourteen separate Acts of Parliament that the child, as a member of society, has a right to protection from the injury of premature labour. Let the Legislature also affirm that children, as members of society, have a right to protection from the injury of ignorance, and take security that they receive—where nothing more can be given—at least, a good secular education. Leaving the parent to choose the school, let society, as well for its own protection as for that of the child, insist that every child shall be taught the three R.'s, as they are called, viz., Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic ; and I am persuaded that the rising generation of Roman Catholics would grow up with such powers, and, in this free country, with such habits of thinking, that they would betimes shake off their yoke. Britain, as America is doing, would eliminate that pestilential, Popish element to which the country owes so much of her existing poverty, misery, and degradation.

In consequence of those causes which I have, and of others which I might have, mentioned, the condition of the lowest classes in our cities is deplorable. It must be seen to be fully known. But some idea may be formed of it from such facts as the following ; and I may add that what is true of Edinburgh is equally true of all other large cities in the island.

In Edinburgh there are 13,209 families, each residing in one room ; and 121 of these rooms are without even one window. In such circumstances, how can purity of morals and decency of manners exist ?

Though there was not one pawn-shop in Scotland till 1806, there are more than 1000 now—of *big* and *wee* pawns, as they are called. Of these, the Glasgow City Mission says :—" They are the most prolific nurseries of crime—the most powerful and degrading enemies with which we have to contend in our work among the poor." This statement I fully endorse ; having found that the ruin of the poor was in almost every case begun—indeed, I might say accomplished—so soon as they turned their steps to the pawn-shop.

The extent to which this ready but ruinous way of raising money on body-clothes, bed-clothes, books, and furniture, is carried on, appears from these facts :

Thirty thousand articles are put in pawn every week ;

Eleven thousand articles were in one month put in pawn in a single office situated in a poor district of the city ;

Twenty thousand pounds, or about that sum, are lost year by year to the poorest of the people from inability to redeem the articles which they have pawned.

Mr. Knox, in a very interesting *brochure* called "Glimpses of the Social Condition of Edinburgh," mentions the case of one man whose house was stripped of everything, and his daughters left unable to cross the door—their mother having stolen and pledged their things while they slept ; and also that of another man, who, though earning eighteen shillings per week, and with his own hand disbursing his wages, was unable to keep his house or children from misery through the facilities the pawn-shops afforded his wife for raising money

to buy drink. Three or four times she had stripped herself and her children, leaving barely rags to cover them : emptying the house of everything she could carry away—the bed-clothes, the clock, the very pots and pans. It is hardly necessary to add that the husband got to no church, and the children to no school.

To mention one among many instances known to myself of the wretchedness and ruin produced by these shops, I knew a man, in a respectable position of life, whose house had been so often plundered and devastated by his wife carrying the household goods to the pawn-shop to procure money for drink, that he had at length to come to terms with her. He allowed her one bottle of whiskey, and before she died two bottles, per day. Incredible as it may appear, she swallowed that quantity.

Public-houses, these demoralisers of the people, are so numerous in Edinburgh—and this city is not worse in that respect than many others both in England and Scotland—that were they put down in a line, with an average frontage of $27\frac{1}{2}$ feet, they would reach a length of not less than four miles !

Drawing their gains chiefly from the wages of working-men, they swallow up—and this is one of the least of their evils—more than 400,000*l.* per year !

On one Saturday night from seven to eleven o'clock the numbers who entered ten of these public-houses were counted, and each of them was on an average entered by 610—men and women, boys and girls !

The sad and terrible results of all these malign influ-

ences are to be seen in our prisons, our workhouses, and especially in our dingy, dark, crowded alleys, courts, lanes, and streets. The physical and moral degradation of their tenants is such, that the question which forces itself on those who visit their houses and know their habits is, Can these dry bones live? They can : as we now, in closing this paper, proceed to show.

Gigantic as the evil is, the country and Churches hold the remedy in their hands if they will only use it—only rise, and, shaking off at once their lethargy and despair, address themselves to a task which will demand time, but, with God's blessing, is by no means impossible. Let the dwellings of the poor be improved—let the proprietors of houses injurious to the health of the community be compelled to shut them up—let the tenants of every house, and of every storey of every house, be provided with water and all other suitable conveniences ! But since the root of our evils lies chiefly in moral causes, it is to such moral remedies as education, religion, and the sympathies of humanity that we are chiefly to trust. These have been tried : nor have been found wanting.

They were not fairly tried in days when it was thought enough to plant one city missionary in a district containing 2000, 5000, or even 10,000 people. One jewel here, and another there, the good man might pick out. Good, no doubt, was done ; but none were more ready to acknowledge than the city missionaries themselves that the means then employed were totally inadequate to the end ; that it was impossible even for the most arduous and devoted missionary to produce by his single efforts

any very palpable effect on the mass around him. Taught by painful failures, and years of comparatively fruitless work, Christian philanthropists have adopted a new system—one that, taken up and vigorously wrought by all the evangelical Churches acting in co-operation, would, in a few years, work such a change on the degraded districts of our cities that the Churches might, though with all humility, claim to have accomplished a greater work than that Cæsar who boasted that he had found Rome brick, and had left it marble.

The principle of the system is as plain as it is powerful. It just lies in applying the worth and wealth, the influence and energies of a well-conditioned Christian congregation to the cultivation of a poor, neglected, but manageable, district. Let me relate, for example, an experiment made by my own congregation.

We selected a district of the town, named The Pleasance, and so called because in old times a religious house stood there, dedicated to Saint Placenza. It embraced a population of 2000 people, of whom but a small number were Irish Roman Catholics. The mass were in a state of practical heathenism ; very few attending any house of God, and about two hundred children wandering neglected on the streets. Along with Dr. Hanna and myself, (the ministers of St. John's,) its office-bearers—numbering some thirty elders and as many deacons—resolved to raise the money, and provide the machinery necessary for cultivating that waste field. Having appointed a missionary and a teacher, whom we undertook to support, we built a school where the children were to

be taught during the week, and the people to worship on Sabbath. As the mountain would not come to Mahomet, it was resolved that Mahomet should go to the mountain. The people of the district must be visited in their houses, and, so to speak, compelled to come in. But this work was not left to the missionary and the teacher. Having divided the whole district into portions, so small that each contained only some six or seven families, we resolved that each of these minor divisions should have a visitor, whose duty it would be to visit the families once or twice a week ; to stir them out of their lethargy ; to counsel them ; to help them, by teaching them how to help themselves ; to improve their homes ; to wean them from drunkenness, to encourage habits of providence, cleanliness, and sobriety ; to prevail on them to send their children to school, and go themselves on the Lord's day to the House of God. Let it be particularly observed that the division allotted to each visitor was so small that the working of it could neither be a heavy demand on their time, nor seriously interfere with any of their other duties.

The plan having been arranged, Dr. Hanna and I explained it from the pulpit, and made an appeal to our congregation ; asking them to supply us with money, but, above all, with agents. The appeal was instantly, and nobly responded to. The money was forthcoming, and some forty or fifty persons offered their services as visitors. With the wealth and worth of St. John's, we descended on the Pleasance. We had a devoted missionary, a capital teacher, and some forty or fifty

Christian agents at work there every week. Each Monday Dr. Hanna met with this staff; progress was reported; the blessings of Heaven were asked; the counsels of wisdom given; the zeal of the visitors stimulated; and the whole machinery kept oiled, and in the best working order. Behold the result! Ere long two hundred children were swept off the streets into the school. On the Lord's day the school began to fill with worshippers. By-and-by, the cry, "Yet there is room," with which our agents went forth week by week, was changed into a demand for increased accommodation. A church must now be built; and our congregation, encouraged by the remarkable success with which God had hitherto blest the work, rose to the occasion and built one. Mr. Cochrane, the missionary, was ordained as a regular minister; and there he now labours, assisted by a full staff of elders and of deacons. His congregation, mainly made up of those who had been once living without God and without hope in the world, embraces 613 members in full communion; and of these not less than two-thirds reside in the immediate neighbourhood. Once sunk, degraded, and irreligious, neglecting the education of their children, neither contributing to the support of religious ordinances, nor even waiting on them, they now have a school overflowing with children, and a church overflowing with worshippers. They pay fees for the education of their children; and, with money saved from the dram-shop, come little short of providing a living for their minister, and meeting all the other expenses of divine worship. Christians have given their work, and Christ

his blessing. The desert is blossoming like the rose ; and the lesson which I would press on my readers is, that what St. John's congregation has done in the Pleasance may be equalled, if not surpassed, by other congregations elsewhere.

This is no singular or solitary case. Edinburgh can produce at least half-a-dozen such. We may take a future opportunity of setting forth these in detail. It is enough at present to say that the question, Can the people of these dark and degraded districts be raised to habits of decency, sobriety, and religion? has been solved—satisfactorily solved. The plan of attaching a poor, irreligious, destitute district to a Christian congregation, which shall charge itself with the duty of cultivating the barren field, has proved a great success. I believe no other plan will, or can, arrest the progress of vice and irreligion. A rising flood, this is threatening to overwhelm us : throne and altar : our country with its noble constitution and many blessed privileges. In the large towns our non-church-going population has been increasing year by year—at a fearful rate. In London, more than half the people are not in the habit of regularly attending any house of God. Do people consider that, unless this evil is vigorously checked, the proportion of the population which profess to fear God and take his Word as their rule of life, will by-and-by dwindle down into a comparatively small minority? They are a minority already ; and it is impossible to regard the ultimate issues without serious alarm. How is the tide of avowed infidelity, or of practical irreligion,

to be stayed—not only stayed, but rolled back? Acts of Parliament cannot meet the emergency. The remedy is in the hands of the Christian Churches, and in no other hands. And should they neglect to apply it, they are without excuse. Let them lay aside their jealousies and, uniting together, march down in one unbroken front to attack the strongholds of ignorance, immorality, and irreligion, and they would carry them as by a grand assault.

When the work is attempted by one congregation here and another there, the fruit of success is in a great measure lost. For, so soon as a man or a family have had their habits changed, they usually change their home; and fleeing the godless neighbourhood for their own sakes, and especially for that of their children, remove to some more decent quarter of the town. The vacancy their removal makes being supplied by incomers of low habits and from low quarters, those who labour to evangelise such isolated districts have the mortification of finding that their work is ever and anon to begin anew. The purified water is ever running out, and a foul stream running in—as fast as the land is cleared of weeds, it is fouled again from the neglected fields around it. This, as we know, is very disheartening; nor is there any remedy for it but such a general co-operation on the part of all evangelical Churches as shall begin and carry on the work on a broad, catholic, and extensive scale. We are not to wait till that is done; but why should it not be done now? The glory of God, the salvation of precious souls, the very salvation of the country, requires

this co-operation. The dark and destitute quarters of our towns being mapped out, let each congregation bring its worth and wealth to bear on the district assigned to it. Conventional privileges, jealous passions, and ancient prejudices must be sacrificed on the altar of our country; for, however able and however willing, the work of evangelising our large towns is a task altogether beyond the power of any one Christian denomination.

If they could, I would gladly see them do it. Nor, when a poor, miserable, wretched sinner was raised from the depths to sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, would I ever think, before I rejoiced, of inquiring whether he had become an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian, or an Independent, or a Baptist. If I believed that any one of these Churches could singly save the perishing, could pluck them from the wreck, I would stand on the shore, and, whatever was the flag that flew at their mast-head, cheer them on to their glorious work. Let it not be said when the armies of Britain and of France, which we are old enough to remember meeting in bloody shock and dreadful struggle at Waterloo, assailed side by side the strongholds of Sebastopol, that Christian Churches cannot co-operate in fighting a better battle and winning a nobler victory. May God give them his Spirit, that they may be "like the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." To stand apart on points of dignity, to contend about trifles, or even matters that are at the best but of secondary importance, to want that charity by which we might sweetly

carry on the work together, and promote the common end for which Jesus, descending from his dignities, lived and suffered, and groaned and died, would be a scandalous spectacle and a fatal mistake ; recalling to recollection these old Bible sayings, "The princes of Zoan are become fools—the sun is gone down over the prophets, and the day is dark unto them."

WINTER.



WITH all appliances we find it difficult sometimes to protect ourselves from the severity of winter. As he heaped fuel on the blazing fire, or, shaking off the snow at his door, returned to a cheerful room and smoking board, what man of feeling has not exclaimed, Pity the poor in such weather as this! As it grows colder, thank God, men's hearts grow warmer; and the season that arrests the flow of rivers, locking them up in ice, opens the springs and swells the stream of charity. Few things, no doubt, are more abused, or more open to abuse. And when the charities we give to relieve suffering and bless innocent and helpless children are wasted on an abominable appetite, how doubly accursed of God and man does it make that love of drink which hardens the hearts of the poor against their offspring, and the hearts of the rich against the poor themselves? The generous are afraid to give, lest their bounty should be abused, and rather aggravate than alleviate the evils of society. That is sad. Yet, when frosts bite keen, and food as well as fuel is scarce, the worst, who are never made

better by neglect, deserve our pity. Base is the selfishness which at such a time enjoys its comforts, nor has a thought to spare for poor old age, with its blood cold and thin; for lone and cheerless widowhood; for mothers with groups of half-naked children who cower over the embers of a dying fire, or lie huddled together, shivering and sleepless, beneath a heap of rags. To such it is "gloomy winter," and to others also—to the soldier, with his bivouac on the blood-stained snow, and the piercing cold aggravating his wounds; to the sailor tossed on angry seas, where the sleety shower blots out both land and lighthouse, and he hawls with bleeding hands on icy ropes to wear his bark off a shore that thunders with the roar of breakers; to the shepherd on the hill, battling with the blinding drift, and, type of the great Good Shepherd, risking his life for the sheep,—this the sad fate he braves—

"down he sinks
Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death;
Mixed with the tender anguish nature shoots
Through the wrung bosom of the dying man;
His wife, his children, and his friends, unseen.
In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
The deadly winter seizes; shuts up sense;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows a stiffened corse,
Stretched out, and bleaching in the northern blast."

Gloomy to such, in the eyes of happy childhood with its holidays, and of youth with its bracing air and healthful exercises, and of households with its family reunions, this season possesses many charms. Defiant of cold, boyhood delights in its blood-stirring games, and nowhere does louder, merrier laughter ring than on the sounding ice. The day that shortens the hours of labour, lengthens those of relaxation and enjoyment. The long evenings, the blazing fire, our quiet book, or the cheerful circle of a household early home, make us forget, when doors are shut and curtains drawn, the desolation without, and hear even with feelings of pleasure the howling of the storm. What pleasant, happy, merry, thankful meetings does it bring round? Sweeping with blustering winds the withered leaves from their parent tree, and asunder for ever from each other, it gathers the scattered family around the kind old hearth by which the patriarch, though the thought of a loved one gone may pass like the shadow of a cloud on the scene, sits, happy, venerated, and beloved, among his children and children's children,—his thin silver locks mingling with the sunny tresses of a child who has climbed his knee, and, with its arms about his neck, clings to the kind old man like a flowering creeper around a hoary tree. While Spring, Summer, and Autumn call to constant labour, Winter, the night and sabbath of the year, invites to rest; and though she kills the sweet flowers with nipping frosts, and with raging blasts strips forests bare, she increases rather than diminishes our social enjoyments—indoor pleasures flowing fullest when streams without are ice-bound, and

the voice of song rising loudest in humble cot and lordly hall when tuneful groves and skies are dumb. Therefore, instead of coldly welcoming this season, or envying the lands that boast perpetual summers, we say with Cowper—

“O Winter ! ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scattered hair with sleet, like ashes, filled ;
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
And dreaded as thou art !”

We hail the season as one of enjoyments which are adapted to our nature, and should awaken gratitude to Him from whom all blessings flow. But bring to the subject a devout heart, regard it also with the eye of the great dramatist, believe with him that there are sermons in stones, tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, and good in everything ; and Winter, though her fields are bare and branches leafless, will yield a crop of profitable and pious thoughts. For example—

Winter presents some beautiful and remarkable illustrations of God's wisdom, power, and goodness.

There is no connection, but the contrary, between holiness and ugliness. As is proved by all his works—even the humblest flower and lowest insect—the Divine Being has an eye for beauty ; and in imparting the same taste to us, God in this, as in other and still higher

respects, made man after his own image. Now, see how He who loves to make his children happy, ministers to our gratification in the very variety of vestments which nature assumes with each changing season. Spring comes forth amid a chorus of melodies, appavelled in green ; next, Summer comes in flowery robes, gay with the brightest colours and perfumed with sweetest odours ; then Autumn comes, in sober russet, bending to her sickle over the golden corn ; and last of all, like a bride to the altar, comes Winter in a robe of purest white, all hung with sparkling diamonds. When the moon sheds her silver light on this snowy mantle, or it lies glistening in slanting sunbeams, it looks so pure and bright and beautiful as to suggest thoughts of Christ's heavenly bride, and the robes they wear who have washed them and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Suggestive as this wintry mantle is of such thoughts, and beautiful as it looks ere earth has stained its heavenly purity, the more closely snow is examined the more will all men's wonder and good men's piety grow. Call Science, the handmaid of devotion, to our aid ! Let her place in the field of a microscope this simple snow-flake, which fell lighter than a feather and will melt at a breath, and what a galaxy of brilliant crystals !—forms of beauty that breed admiration in the dullest minds, and pouring contempt on man's loveliest designs, raise our contemplations to Him who, out of his treasures, "giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes, and casteth out his ice like morsels."

Teaching us the proper relations of things, God as

signs a lower place to beauty than to usefulness. In the arrangements of nature, as it should be in ours—in our education, our households, our churches and forms of worship—the first of these is last, and the last is first; and thus none will be surprised to find, what reason should expect and science proves, that God in the snows of winter gives the earth a covering not merely ornamental but useful, and even more useful than ornamental. Strange as the statement may appear to such as are accustomed to associate snow only with cold, it affords a warm covering to the naked fields. Wrapped in snow, as an infant in the furs and fleecy coverings a mother's care provides, the earth is protected from the severest weather; and, safely sleeping in her warm bosom, thousands of delicate plants and animals pass the winter, ready to come forth at the call of Spring amid the wonders of an annual resurrection.

“Th’ imprisoned worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie covered close.
I saw the woods and fields at close of day,
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn’d so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His fav’rite herb; while all the leafless groves
That skirt th’ horizon wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform’d,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face

Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower : the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thick'ning mantle ; and the green
And tender blade, that feared the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil."

But these considerations do not exhaust the subject. The colour as well as the texture of snow is a witness to the wisdom and goodness of God. This covering—no shroud that wraps the dead—is white ; and, had God pleased, might have been brown, or red, or black, or radiant with all the dyes of the rainbow. Yet white is chosen—not of caprice, or simply of taste ; but because, as experience teaches us and science proves, white vestments, as they are the coolest in hot, are the warmest in cold weather. Can any one reflect on this, and not join the Psalmist in exclaiming, "How manifold are thy works, Lord God Almighty ! in wisdom hast thou made them all !"

But some may object ; saying, that if snow, by its colour as well as texture, protects such plants and animals as sleep through winter beneath its covering, it must necessarily expose many other creatures to the eyes of their enemies ; betraying them, and making them an easy prey. The objection is ingenious, but not sound. God's foresight has provided for this. For in those northern latitudes where the ground is always for long months covered with snow, and even on our own higher hills that are often white with drift when the valleys they

shelter are green, many animals change their dress with the season ; and that they may elude the eyes of enemies, their coat, whether it be furs or feathers, assumes in winter the colour of snow. How manifold are the resources of God !—and how may such things suggest this thought, if He so cares for his meanest creatures, arranging the great laws of nature with the view of providing for their safety and ministering to their happiness, why should they for whom He gave his Son to die, distrust his providence or doubt his love—“Are not five sparrows,” said our Lord, “sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? Fear not, therefore ; ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

From her snows let us turn to the crystal pavement which Winter spreads over rivers, lakes, and even Arctic seas, and we shall find in ice a remarkable illustration of Divine wisdom, power, and goodness. See yonder crowd who pursue their games on the frozen lake ; and how man, without the power that trod the waves of Galilee, walks the water, and, on an element proverbially unstable, plants his feet as firmly as on a marble floor ! Familiarity with the fact has made us insensible to its wonders ; but how great they are, appeared in the incredulity of the natives of a tropical land. A missionary had gained on their simple hearts ; and, having entire confidence in the good man’s integrity, king, chiefs, and people were ready to embrace the faith. But, alas ! his hopes, like an ill-fated bark, were wrecked at the harbour mouth ; and all through telling them that in the land where he had left

father and mother to preach Christ to them, the rivers, at certain seasons, became so solid that he had walked erect and dry-shot on the surface of their waters. The story to their ears had the sound of a lie, a manifest lie; and regarding it as an impossibility, and the missionary as an impostor, they summarily dismissed him with disgrace. Incredible as it may appear to those who have no experience of the fact, water, when its temperature falls to thirty-two degrees, passes from the fluid to a solid state, and becomes ice. But many who know that, do not know that it presents us, in the form of ice, with one of the most remarkable proofs of the wisdom and goodness of God. Turned to ice, water is the only substance which loses instead of gaining weight on passing from a fluid to a solid state. For instance, solid is specifically heavier than fluid gold; so that were it thrown into a crucible of molten gold, it would sink to the bottom; and the same is true of all other metals and substances but water. A piece of ice floats on the surface; plunged to the bottom of pool or lake, it rises like a cork to the top. The poet says,—

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

But here is no unfathomable mystery; for in making water an exception to an otherwise universal law, the wisdom and goodness of God are plain as sunbeams. Consider what had happened if the ice formed on the surface of rivers, lakes, and seas, instead of being kept by this exceptional law floating on the top to be melted

by sun and winds, had sunk, like other solid things, to the bottom. Then each returning winter had added another and another layer to this frozen pavement ; and as these layers lay sunk in depths beyond the reach of spring winds or summer suns, the icy floor, growing thicker year by year, had at length risen to the surface : and so in time, but long ere now, every dancing river, and bright lake, and swelling sea had become a dead, dull mass of ice—producing such a degree of cold as to create a perpetual winter in all regions of the earth, destroy everything that lived, and turn this beautiful world into a scene of universal death. Behold the wisdom and goodness which, by making water an exception, and the only exception, to an otherwise universal law, has averted such a dire catastrophe ! Ice floats on the surface of pond and pool, lake and sea, and on that fact hangs all life, and the world's old promise, “ While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” Thus with the ice and snow that quench other fires, the child of God may feed those of his devotion ; and, amid the deep silence of groves where birds are mute, and of streams locked fast in ice, and of landscapes muffled in snow, faith hears the voices of angels singing, “ Holy, holy, holy art thou, Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of thy glory ! ”

Winter presents an image of our state by nature.

In his Song of Songs, Solomon introduces our Lord Jesus Christ calling such as He hath redeemed by his blood and won by his love from a state of nature into

one of grace ; and though the winters of Palestine are much less severe than ours, he finds in the despoiled and ravaged aspect of nature an emblem of the ruin wrought by sin. To that divine and gracious call, winter, in the aspect in which we are now regarding it, as well as spring, lends its poetry, as Christ's heart does its fire. "Rise up," he says, "my love, my fair one, and come away ; for, lo, the winter is past ; the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

The further north we travel, as winter grows more severe, this figure grows more striking ; nor is any emblem of our spiritual condition by nature more appropriate than the season when days are short and nights are long, and green hills are snow, and streams are ice, and dews are hoarfrosts, and leafy branches are naked stems, and blooming flowers lie withered, and woods and skies are dumb, and the birds which filled them with cheerful melodies sit, silent and shivering, on leafless boughs. Yet till the Sun of Righteousness arise to enlighten, warm, and revive the soul with His beams, there is no winter without so dreary as that within us. What ice feels so cold, what soil is so frost-bound and barren, as an unrenewed heart ? There, grow no fruits of the Spirit ; there, flow no streams of holy pleasure ; there, no peace, soaring upward, sings like a lark in sunny skies. Light there is, but how feeble !—and only such as shines in the shortest day when, late to rise and hastening to set, the wan sun skirts the southern sky. It is

light without heat ; a knowledge of Divine truth without any deep and saving sense of it—a clear head, perhaps, but a cold heart ; the form of godliness without its power.

God is love. But the carnal mind, says an Apostle, is enmity against God, is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be ; nor is it till his Holy Spirit changes our hearts, and makes us through faith new creatures in Jesus Christ, that “the winter is past, and the time of the singing of birds is come.” If this divine life is begun, our hearts have undergone a change greater and more beautiful than spring works on the face of nature ; and let joy abound ! for surely his peace may flow like a river, whose righteousness, in its fresh and pure and full abundance, resembles the waves of the sea. Nor does this winter of the soul pass away, like that of nature, to be followed by spring, that season afterwards by summer, and that again by autumn. On the contrary, in holy desires, endeavours, and deeds, all the three seasons enter on the stage together. And thus to those whom God has brought into a state of grace, we may apply the remarkable words of Amos, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed ; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.” Like the cedar for strength, and the palm for stateliness, and the olive for fruitfulness, a converted man is of all trees most like the orange, on whose evergreen boughs fresh buds are bursting, and snow-white flowers are blooming, and golden fruit is hanging at one and the same time—or, to

vary the illustration and borrow a figure from Bible story, a soul in Christ's hand is like the almond rod in Aaron's, that at once budded, and blossomed, and brought forth fruit.

“The winter is past!”—Happy those who can say so! Let them magnify the Lord, though the change is but beginning to appear. What, though their praise be feeble as the first faltering notes that from a naked tree break the winter silence; what, though the grace of God in them is like the gentle flower that springs among lingering snows, and lifts a drooping head to frosty skies? These are the welcome heralds of the spring. And those are pledges that He who year by year renews the face of the earth shall send forth his Spirit, till in the enjoyment of hope, and peace, and liberty, and purity, we can say “The winter is past;” and, in the exercise of faith, can welcome Death himself, and recognise in his dreaded summons the voice of our beloved, saying, “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!”

Winter presents an image of a state of grace.


Excepting, perhaps, the dark spot in the bloom of the bean, there is nothing in nature perfectly black—neither the sable's fur, nor the raven's wing, nor the glossy tresses of the Indian maid, nor the dark man's lustrous eyes. Even so among the most wicked men, none are found perfectly bad. The worst can be worse; and shall be, since the guilt of the impenitent will increase with their years, and go on darkening, deepening through an eternity of sin and suffering. But in snow, as it falls in downy flakes from heaven, or lies far removed from the

smoke of cities and the dust of fields and roads, in the bosom of the Alps, or on the sides of their silver horns, nature presents us with an object of perfect purity. Dazzlingly white, the fairest skin or finest fabric looks dull, if not foul, beside it. Here is a beautiful, perfect emblem of Christ's righteousness—robed in which, "God sees no iniquity in Jacob, and no perverseness in Israel." What so fit to represent the righteousness that cost our Lord his life, and is the price of ours, as this snowy, stainless mantle? God himself turns the sinner's eye on it, and forbids him to despair. By the cross of his beloved Son, by the fountain of redeeming blood, by the laver of Divine regeneration, He addresses the despondent and despairing, saying, "Come now, and let us reason together : though **thy sins** be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

Nor is it only the pure, perfect, stainless, and law-fulfilling character of redeeming righteousness which snow suggests to a devout and thoughtful eye. How full in their abundance, how free in their distribution, are these treasures of ~~the sky~~!—**covering** alike lowly cottages and royal ~~palaces~~, the poor man's garden and the rich man's lands, tiny molehill and towering mountain. By many images peculiar to their own country, the sacred writers laboured to set forth the fulness and freeness of Divine mercy ; but the stores of nature supplied them, perhaps, with none so appropriate as those feathery flakes that fill the whole expanse of heaven, and, wheeling down in countless myriads, cover all the landscape ; casting over ~~the~~ **impurities** of town and country, of roads and fields,

of farms and graveyards, a veil of stainless snow. If this is an image of the mercy of God, why should any perish?—who is there who would not be saved would they only spread out their guilty souls in penitence, and faith, and prayer? Change as great should be wrought on them as a winter night works, silent and noiseless, on the face of the earth. No lightning flashed through the darkness, no storm howled, no thunder peals woke the lightest sleeper ; yet, typifying the advent of a kingdom which, often at least, “comes not with observation,” on opening our shutters in the morning, the eye, as far as it can reach, sees gardens, houses, fields, winding river, and glassy lake,—the whole landscape, onward to the swelling hills upon its verge, robed in one broad mantle of heavenly beauty and spotless purity. So in God’s sight appear the heart, and life, and character of all who, abandoning every hope of salvation by works, receive the righteousness which is not of works, but of faith. Polluted and foul by nature as others, all believers have put on Christ. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; and, still engaged in the work of sanctification, they are not idle but diligent, not careless but prayerful, to “be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

AUTUMN.

 is pleasant to leave the hot, hard pavements of a city for the meadow's cool green sward ; pent-up streets for a spacious but sequestered valley ; dull walls of brick or stone for the height and majesty of mountains that dip their feet in the lake, and raise their heads to the clouds ; the roar of carriages and din of crowds for a quiet scene, whose only sounds are those of bleating sheep and lowing cattle, the murmur of a stream or dash of tiny waves on the shelving shore, the shouts of happy reapers where the corn falls to their sickles, or is borne off to threshing-floors. Every man of taste enjoys the beauties of such a scene ; and a man of devout, habitual piety sees God as plainly mirrored there, as are the flowers, trees, rocks, and hills in the glassy surface of its lake.

Such appear to have been the circumstances of David, when in the 65th Psalm he composed that magnificent ode,—grand song for a Harvest Home,—where he adores God in nature and soars on the wings of inspiration to the height of his argument. No doubt descriptions of

country scenes, glowing with the rich colours of Thomson or Goldsmith, have been penned in city garrets. But while their authors, drawing on imagination, say no more of green things and nature than some poor rose, or dusty plant of thyme that stood on the window-sill, thirsting for a shower and drooping for lack of sunshine, that Psalm has the freshness of painting where the artist, carrying palette and canvas to the open fields, copies direct from nature. The very mountains appear to have been towering before David, of which, singing God's praise, he says, "Which by His strength setteth fast the mountains;" overhead, the clouds, heaven's treasuries of rain, floated in the blue air, and below, winding along, went the river that sparkled in the sun, and, conducted by a thousand conduits, gave fertility to the soil, of which he said, "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God: Thou makest it soft with showers: Thou blessest the springing thereof;" and when, still rising from nature up to nature's God, he sung, "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness; the pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing," one cannot but feel that the scene was before him—hills dotted with snowy fleeces, and an umbrageous valley, where crowded reapers, to shouts, and song, and merry laughter, made wide gaps in the golden corn. The scenes of autumn raised David's mind to God. And well they may ours; for in meditating on this period of the year, I may remark, that—

Autumn is the season in which God is eminently, or rather pre-eminently visible.

It is a remarkable fact, that, notwithstanding the progress of arts and science, and the vast number of useful as well as brilliant discoveries man has made during the last four thousand years, he has not added so much as one new grain to those he cultivates for food. Sculptured monuments, as old as, if not older than, the days of Joseph, show that wheat, barley, and our other grains, were well known to the Egyptians; as well known in the early ages of the world as in this. Another, and a no less remarkable fact is this, that the *cereal grasses*—by which we mean those plants that yield wheat, barley, and such other grains—are nowhere, on the face of all the earth, found growing wild. Apparently unable to live by self-sowing, they have totally disappeared from every country which man, abandoning, has left to its own resources—flowers, forests, fruit-trees, roofless cities and ruined temples remain, but no stalks of corn, to tell that he once was there. If they cannot live now, it seems fair to conclude, that these plants never did live without his culture; and that the knowledge of their uses and of their modes of cultivation he owed to the direct instruction of Him, his teacher in this as in many things else, who, to quote the words of Scripture, “took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden to dress and keep it.”

These facts suggest such an intercourse between man and his Maker as corresponds with Scripture, and those hints it gives of the intimate and happy communion in

which they lived, till man fell and sin estranged them, Ignorant of these things, and, at least to appearance, altogether ignoring Divine Providence, one of our poets ascribes the bounties of harvest to human industry alone, and, thrusting God entirely out of view, sings :—

Attempered sun arise,
Sweet beamed, and shedding oft through lucid clouds
A pleasing calm ; while broad and brown below
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head,

* * * * * *

Far as the circling eye can shoot around
Unbounded tossing in a flood of corn.
These are thy blessings, Industry ! rough power !
Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain,
Raiser of human kind ! by nature cast,
Naked and helpless, out amid the woods
And wilds, to rude inclement elements ;
With various seeds of art deep in the mind
Implanted, and profusely poured around
Materials infinite, but idle all,
Still unexerted, in the unconscious breast,
Slept the lethargic powers ; Corruption still
Voracious, swallowed what the liberal hand
Of Bounty scattered o'er the savage year ;
And still the sad barbarian, roving, mixed
With beasts of prey ; or for his acorn meal
Fought the fierce tusky boar ; a shivering wretch !
* * * till Industry approached
And roused him from his miserable sloth :
His faculties unfolded ; pointed out
Where lavish nature the directing hand
Of art demanded.

Giving all the honour to human industry and its triumphs which is due, the heathen themselves teach us to bring a higher actor than man upon the scene. They recognised their dependence for the bounties of

harvest on the will and providence of God—by this grand truth redeeming from childishness some of their wildest legends, and softening to some extent the savage features of customs from which humanity revolts. A tribe in our Indian Empire, for example, never sowed their fields till they had first taken steps to propitiate their god. These, as was related to me by an officer who had had charge of their district, consisted of a human sacrifice, offered up in the person of a prisoner of war, around whom the peasants stood grimly, knife in hand, each ready, so soon as the fatal blow was struck, to rush in on the victim, slice a piece of flesh from the bleeding corpse, and, hastening with it to his fields, sprinkle them with the dripping gore. Neither the pity with which, spectators of such a murderous scene, we should have looked on the trembling victim, nor the horror with which we would have turned our eyes from such savage rites, could blind them to the fact, that these heathen, however culpable and revolting their mode of expressing it, owned a power superior to human industry, and in the harvests of their fruitful fields, saw God, to use the words of David, “crowning the year with His goodness.”

The Greeks attributed man's first knowledge of the arts of agriculture to other than his own genius. They regarded them as a revelation, not a discovery; and ascribed them directly to Divine instruction. According to their mythology, Ceres, the goddess of corn and harvests, who gives her name to that family of plants which, called *cereal grasses*, yield wheat, barley, and

such other grains, first taught a native of Attica the art of husbandry. She showed him how to plough the ground ; how to sow and reap corn ; how to make bread, and cultivate fruit-trees. Nor did the benignant divinity stop there. Reminding us of the true story that relates how Jesus sent His disciples forth to carry the tidings of salvation to a perishing world, the legend, rising to worthy ideas of what a God should be and do, relates that Ceres, having presented her own chariot to her disciple, commanded him to take farewell of his native land, and travel all over the earth to communicate the arts of agriculture to its rude inhabitants—who had till then subsisted on nothing better than roots and acorns.

We find a nation more ancient than the Greeks who also regarded agriculture as a Divine gift, and recognised in the fruits of harvest more than the industry of man ; even the providence and power of God. These were the Egyptians. According to them, it was Isis, one of their most celebrated deities, who, on being changed into a cow and afterwards restored to the human form, communicated to their ancestors man's earliest knowledge of the arts of husbandry. In acknowledgment of the gift and in honour of the giver, they worshipped her under the form of a woman, holding a globe in her hands, and also a vessel filled with ears of corn. Nor did they consider themselves indebted to Isis for the knowledge of agriculture only ; but plainly, though in a wild and weird legend, attributed to her benignant influence the bounties of every harvest. In Egypt, as is well

known, these depend on the overflowings of the Nile ; and, as the story ran, it was to the tears she shed over the body of Osiris, her murdered brother, that the country owed those annual inundations which imparted such fertility to the soil of Egypt as made it the granary of the world.

In these old legends, who may not recognise traditions—though changed and distorted—of those early days when man had God for his teacher, and Eden for his home—a proof and illustration of our statement that in autumn, with its ripened fruits and golden harvests, the power and providence of God are pre-eminently conspicuous? Not that the other seasons do not also proclaim His glory. They do, were it by nothing else than their regular succession. It was reckoned a great triumph of human art when they constructed a chronometer in London, which formed perhaps man's nearest approach in mechanism to the perfection of the works of God—a time-piece which, after being carried round the globe, was found on the ship's return to have deviated from true time by two seconds only in the course of a whole year. But the seasons are regulated by a clock which, placed in the heavens, has gone on without mending or winding, not for one year, nor a hundred, nor a thousand, but many thousand years with undeviating regularity. How manifold are Thy works, Lord God Almighty ; in wisdom hast Thou made them all ! In their unfailing succession how do the seasons display Thy providence, and illustrate Thy promise, given beneath the rainbow, by a mountain altar and beside the stranded ark, “ While

the earth remaineth seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

Whether the phenomena be those of winter, when streams lie locked in ice, and the earth looks dead, wrapped in a shroud of snow ; or of spring, at whose call nature undergoes an annual resurrection, and leaves her grave in the bloom of a perpetual youth ; or of summer, gay with flowers ; or of autumn, crowned with ears of nodding corn, "all Thy works praise Thee, O God, and show forth Thy glory." And, thanks to science, each new discovery in the realms of nature but confirms our faith in the Word of God ; and, like the steps of one who climbs a mountain, enlarges our views of the goodness, wisdom, and power of Him who is the Maker and Monarch of all. Yet autumn is the only one of the seasons when the Church, in days of thanksgiving, calls her members specially to own and praise the goodness of God. And why but because it is specially conspicuous when in bountiful harvests He crowns the year with His goodness, and supplies those who seek daily bread with a twelvemonth's store—in overflowing barns and swelling stack-yards, with food for a whole year to come?

Autumn crowns the other seasons. It shows God's work complete and finished, and therefore glorifies Him most—the other seasons being but preparatory steps to this. Winter prepares the bed for the seed ; its pause resting, its snows and rains watering, and its swelling frosts breaking up the soil. Spring, with soft and warm breath wakens the vitality of the buried grain ; from its

dry and husky form evoking a green tiny blade. With her showers of light and heat, with cooling rain and burning sunshine, summer nourishes the tender plant, developing the flowers that are the parents of the precious fruit. Lord of the year, these "cast up" the way for the approach of autumn, and so the poet of the "Seasons" sings—

Crowned with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on ; the Doric reed once more,
Well pleased, I tune. Whate'er the wintry frost
Nitrous prepared ; the various blossom'd spring,
Put in white promise forth ; and summer suns
Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.

Stop in midsummer, and the seasons and labour that preceded is labour lost,—it were the springing of an arch without its key-stone, or the walls of a house without roof and coping. It is when fields, once white with winter snow, once green with reedy leaves, once waving in the wind with upright heads and empty ears, grow golden, fall to bands of joyous reapers, are borne from the rough stubble to full barn-yards and busy mills, it is then that God comes forth from the clouds and darkness around His throne, the Father and Friend of all—crowning the year with His goodness, and giving bread to both His praying and prayerless creatures. We crown autumn with ears of corn ; and she, as the Jews did with their first fruits, carries her golden treasures to the Temple and lays them on the altar of her God. She crowns Him with her honours ; to Him, as having blessed the labours

of the husbandman, and guided the secret processes of nature, and directed the procession of revolving seasons, and distributed the proportions of shower and sunshine, ascribing the glory and praise that are due.

Autumn is a joyous season.

The harvest was particularly so in old times, especially in that happy land where God, their lawgiver, directed the Israelites both how to cultivate, and how to reap the ground. "Thou shalt not sow thy field," He said, "with mingled seed ; thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." In Italy I have often seen an ox and an ass in the same yoke ; nor do these injunctions forbid it. Made for the Jews, to whose circumstances they were adapted, and whom they were intended to warn against intercourse, and especially intermarriages, with the surrounding heathen, their authority has passed away ; but not so, at least in spirit, those harvest laws which God enjoined on Israel. What benevolence breathes, what grand lessons of humanity are embodied, in the following rules:—"When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest . . . thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger . . . When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it : it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again, it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not

glean it afterward : it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt : therefore I command thee to do this thing."

The result of laws so well adapted to foster the spirit of humanity, we see in that charming picture of a harvest-field which adorns the pages of the Book of Ruth. There, save where stiff old age or tender childhood seek to earn a little wage, the reapers, fair women and stalwart youths, a blithe and merry band, go down in steady line on the ranks of the standing corn. Behind them, scattered over the stubble, where some bend beneath the weight of years, and others are busier with play than work, come old men and women, widows, and orphan children, gleaning the stray stalks, left for them and the birds of heaven, growing into a sheaf of corn which, borne on their heads, they carry home at nightfall to grind in the household mill, to eat and be satisfied, and praise Him, who, kind guardian of the poor, said to the husbandman, "Thou shalt not gather the gleanings of thy harvest." Well, one day on the uplands of Bethlehem, the sun is shining bright, and with song and challenge and merry laughter the reapers ply their flashing sickles amid the corn, when the master appears on the scene. A kind man is Boaz, and pious as kind. "The Lord be with you," is his "good morning" to his servants,—the familiar but devout wish he offers. Suspending work and song to do him reverence, they in turn illustrate a rule that may be as well expressed by the words, "such master, such servants," as by those in more common use, "such priest, such people,"—"The

Lord bless thee," is their respectful, kind, and devout response. And now, not deeming the poor beneath his notice, the good man turns from the reapers to the gleaners, and among these pensioners of God's bounty and his own, his eye lights on a widow, young in years but of modest mien. Poorly clad and of a sad countenance, early acquainted with sorrow, a widow, friendless, a stranger in a strange land, the gentle Ruth appeals to the kindest feelings of a noble heart. Nor in vain. Her whom ruthless villany would have marked down for its prey, he commends to the care of virtuous maidens, and with a delicate attention to the feelings of the poor, worthy as well of our imitation as of our praise, he whispers to the reapers, "Let fall some handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them." Beautiful picture! one we love to dwell on.

Our modern system of husbandry has blotted all this out. We have bigger stacks; we make more money; but it may be a question whether the country has not lost more morally than it has gained materially by the change—lost more in the dying out of these old kindly customs than gained in the greater produce of the soil. Nor is it possible to look on this picture of an old harvest-field, lighted up with the sunshine of human kindness, without some feeling of regret that such scenes belong to the past, and, only found now in books and picture-galleries, are numbered with the things that were.

Still, with its harvests and the bounties of the year, autumn is a gladsome season. One is glad of it for the sake of the very birds, the sweet choristers of bush and

field, and many other creatures else. They rejoice and revel in its profusion ; and, storing up its bounties in hollow tree or homes beneath the ground, are provisioned against the storms of winter. How dead his soul in whom it awakens no feelings of gladness and gratitude to see, in fields where the sheaves stand thick and tall, plenty for man and beast ; ground to hope that the poor of the land shall eat and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord their God.

Its very labours present a cheerful aspect. What sights so pleasant as those it offers ? What toil where the sweat in which man eats his bread wears less the aspect of a curse ? The blue sky flecked with snowy clouds, the neighbouring wood, where some late songster peals out her music, tinted with the colours of the rainbow, the long stretches of golden corn that bespeak food and plenty, the healthful breeze wantoning with the ruddy cheek and dishevelled hair of youthful reapers, the bright flashes of the sickle, the brighter flashes of happy faces, the merry laughter of light hearts, the robust health that makes a play of work, how pleasant the spectacle ! How different the sunless room in the crowded city, where the workman sits, pale and lonesome, breathing a stifling atmosphere ; or the tall mill, where wan and ill-developed forms stand amid ceaseless whirr and dust, watching from early morn to night the threads and flying spindles ; or the forge where, begrimed with smoke and stunned with din, half-naked men swing the heavy hammer and blow the roaring fire ; or the dripping pit, where the grim miner, leaving the sun and

green fields, descends to pass his days in the regions of perpetual night, perilling life for the treasures the earth hides in her bowels. What greater contrast than a pale, sickly needlewoman, toiling with thin fingers by the night lamp at her weary task in city garret or hot, crowded, stifling workshop, and yonder rustic maid with form to which health and out-door labour lend grace, mirth sparkling in her eyes, on her cheek roses that shine through the tan, in one hand a reaper's sickle, and in the other the nodding heads of corn. Alas! that in many country districts their moral should correspond so ill with their material aspects! It is sad to think that beneath those charming scenes of rural beauty that culminate in the happy spectacle of a harvest-field, there lies a coarseness of manners and licentiousness of conduct that makes the innocence of country life, as contrasted with that of town life, an utter dream. The habits of the peasantry in some quarters are little higher than those of the cattle they tend—a sad and shameful fact; one which calls aloud for a remedy on the part of the ministers, parents, and masters of this Christian and Protestant land.

But to return to the gladsome and joyful aspects of this season. What a pleasant sight, when winds have winnowed the standing sheaves, to see the loaded cart rocking over the furrowed fields; grey-haired peasants who, bent and done with labour, are themselves ready to fall like a shock of corn in its season, leaning on their staves, and mothers with smiling infants in their arms, turning out of doors to see the last load borne home

amid the shouts of brawny men, and smiles of maidens, and shrill cheers of troops of boys and girls, who, infected with the general happiness, swell the procession, and cheer—they know not why. And when early snows powder the hill-tops, and russet leaves fly whirling through the air and sweep along the road, how pleasant in passing the snug farmstead amid these tokens of coming winter, to see the bounties of Providence stored under roof and thatch, safe from frosts and storm. The precious fruits of the earth safely lodged, let Harvest Home be celebrated. But with cheerfulness, let grateful thanks be given to Him who blessed the hands of labour, and whose paths, as He held the winds in His fist, and measured out due proportions of shower and sunshine, dropped fatness on fields that had otherwise been scorched with heat or drowned with rain. Where or at what other time are thoughtless folly and wild riot more reprehensible? Let people be happy by all means, but holy also; celebrating harvest homes in the spirit of the law which required the Jews to carry the first cut sheaf of corn to the house, and lay it, a pious offering, on the altar of God. The beastly riot, the drunkenness, and wild excesses of other days are happily disappearing from ours. May they everywhere, and soon, give place to the practice,—to her honour first begun in England,—where, with an ample feast and pleasant hours for all who shared in harvest labour, the *fête* is opened by an act of worship; and voices that rung with merry laughter amid the falling corn, and shouted as the last waggon swung in at the gate with its golden load, sweetly mingle in

praise to Him to whose mercy we owe alike the bread that perisheth, and what never perisheth—Jesus, the bread of life.

Autumn is a solemn season.

Like a fine piece of music which now sinks into dying strains and now swells into a flood of melody, with passages both grave and gay, this season presents varied features—combining deeply solemn with bright and cheerful aspects. Now the mornings are cool and bracing, the days are clear, and the nights, lighted up by a full harvest moon, shine with unusual splendour; and if flowers, lingering only in gardens, and tempting the bee in the uplands where heather robes the hills in purple, have vanished from field and moor and meadow, the loss is largely compensated. In place of one uniform, sober robe of green, dulled by summer dust and heat, the woods assume the gayest garb, and glow with such bright and varied hues as sets at nought the pride of dress, and highest arts of painters. The tints of autumn impart such beauty to the earth as glowing sunsets to the sky. Yet, as in that lovely victim of a fell disease, who sits cushioned in a sick-chamber, with hands white as the snowy pillows that support her form, and eyes that shine with a strange, unusual lustre, and cheeks tinted like a delicate rose, the beauties of autumn are those of decay: and he who can hold converse with nature may, as if there were “tongues in trees,” hear this solemn voice sounding forth on the ears of a heedless world, “We all do fade as a leaf.” In these dying leaves, man beholds the affecting emblems of himself.

Beautiful, but solemn sight, they teach us that by-and-by this life and world shall know us no more than the trees shall know them.

Autumn-leaves fade to fall. The connection between their fragile forms and the stem grows weak, the flow of sap stagnates, and at length ceases—and they die; and now a wind, the howling herald of winter, strikes the tree and strips it naked. Flying leaves fill the troubled air, go whirling along the ground, and, swept from their parent stem to be scattered far and wide, present a sight that suggests sad thoughts to thoughtful minds—how sin has broken the holy ties which united us to God; how sinners are hurried away and along by the power of temptation; in the case of the best, how true the words, “Our iniquities like the wind have carried us away.”

Here, thank God, the emblem ceases. Swept away by the gale, tossed by eddies into rotten heaps, left on roads to be trodden under foot and mingled with the mire, or dropped into brawling streams that convey them, madly dancing, to the river which flings its wreck ashore or floats them out to sea, they return no more to the parent from whose arms they were torn. But the ravages of sin are not irremediable. Whom it has carried away from God, Jesus has come to restore, and by faith in his blood restores,—“Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness, I bring near my righteousness.” “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” And such power does the grace of God impart to believers, that, though

once like withered leaves, which winds whirl into the air, roll along the road, and seizing, fling into flood or fire, they now withstand temptations,—as a crag the roaring blast, or a tree with roots rifted in the solid rock, the tempest that may shake, but cannot remove it—“They that trust in the Lord, shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved.”

While her forests with their sere and yellow leaves warn us of our own decay and death, the fields of autumn recall to thoughtful minds truths yet more solemn. These fields give as they get. This abundant crop, and that scanty one, teach us, that they who in prayers, sacrifices, and labours for the cause of God, sow sparingly, shall reap also sparingly, but that they, on the other hand, who sow bountifully, shall reap also bountifully—learning in heaven, if not on earth, that God loveth a large and cheerful giver.

Moreover, what husbandman ever reaped wheat from acres he sowed with barley? Be the season favourable or adverse, be the soil the richest loam or hungry moorland, as was the kind of seed sown in spring, so is the kind of harvest reaped in autumn. Even so, as in those fields where the same grain falls to the reaper's sickle that fell from the sower's hand, as man soweth in his life he shall reap at his death; “Be not deceived,” says Paul, “God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to the flesh [indulges in the lusts of the flesh] shall of the flesh reap corruption [the miseries of hell]; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Moreover, the season which reminds us of these truths reminds us of the grand occasion when they shall be realised—to the everlasting joy of some, and the everlasting sorrow of others. Around us the emblems of our death hang in the tinted foliage, and lie at our feet in withered leaves ; above us, the sun, as if himself decaying and wan with age, sheds a fainter light, communicates a feebler warmth, and, like man in the evening of life, goes earlier to bed, and is later to rise ! but before us the field with its crowd of reapers, and flashing sickles, and falling corn—to be borne off, the grain to the garner, the chaff to the fire—suggests something yet more solemn—the most solemn scene of which this world shall be the theatre : the last great assize : all Adam's family met face to face for the first and the last time, in one vast assembly ; the God of Glory descending to judgment ; the great white throne filled by the august person of His Son ; the crowd of angels, ministers to do his will, and give, in the curse executed on one class and the crowns conferred on another, to every man according to his deeds, entering the vast, awed, agitated, solemn multitude to part it into two great divisions ; to call those who have accepted Christ to glory, and consign such as have unhappily rejected Him to inexpressible and endless woe. Giving a grandeur and solemnity to the scene which, though unheeded, perhaps, either by the farmer who is thinking only of his profits or the reapers who are thinking only of their gains, belongs to none other scene on earth,—Jesus said, “ The harvest is the end of the world ; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore

the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Yes : let us hear ; heed the warning ; seek and embrace the Saviour ; and in making our calling and election sure, work while it is called to-day, lest we should have to bemoan our folly, and cry, as we look back with unavailing regrets on the past, and forward with shrinking dread on the future, **" THE HARVEST IS PAST, THE SUMMER IS ENDED, AND WE ARE NOT SAVED ! "**

THE PEST, PROVIDENCE, AND PRAYER.

IN the month of August, 1845, I was spending a few days in an old mansion house on the shores of the Moray Firth. The oak-panelled walls of the dining-room were hung with pictures of the ancestors of my host, some of whom had played no inconspicuous part in the olden time. The sheen of their breastplates, and their serious, determined air, comported well with their history. Right or wrong, they had, with others of the nobility and gentry, espoused the cause of the Covenant; but unlike many who, turning back, proved a deceitful bow in the day of battle, they stuck true to the "blue banner;" fighting, suffering for it, and earning the respect which courage and consistency seldom fail to secure.

Thinking, by way of contrast, of the happy days in which we live—tolerating differences, and granting to others the liberty we claim for ourselves—and how quietly that old mansion, once flashing with the fires and wrapt in the smoke of musketry, now stood among its

venerable ash-trees and elms, I stepped out from their shade, one fine morning, to see the plenty as well as enjoy the peace that blessed our favoured land. There it lay all around, in hedged and well-cultivated fields, which, ripening under God's showers and sunshine, and growing white unto the harvest, promised abundance both for man and beast. But what is this? Yesterday there were broad acres of potato there, with stems erect, leaves of healthy green, and the *shaws*, as they are called in Scotland, so luxuriant that it was not possible to distinguish one drill from another. Changed in one short night, this field is now, so to speak, but the corpse of what it had been. No longer one broad flush of green, every separate furrow is visible, and each plant stands with head drooping to the ground, its stems bent under the weight of leaves that, withered, blighted, blackened, impart to the scene a melancholy aspect, and to the air a strangely fœtid odour. While I, who had been a country clergyman, and was more or less experienced in agriculture, stood wondering at a phenomenon which I found myself utterly unable to explain, the tenant of the farm came up ; and him I found as much amazed, and, as was natural in his circumstances, more distressed at the sight than myself. A grey-haired man, he had never seen the like before.

In the days of those Covenanters whose mailed and sombre figures gave an antique and martial aspect to the oak panels of the old mansion, some would have found a ready explanation of this calamity in "the evil eye," the curse or *cantrips* of a malicious witch. But in the

northern part of the island "the schoolmaster had been abroad" for more than a century; wolves and witches had both disappeared together—the burning of the last witch and the killing of the last wolf having occurred much about the same time; and so the farmer, though greatly puzzled, sought for an explanation of the matter in other than preternatural causes. "It beats a', sir," he said; "it dings my judgment a'thegither. I'm thinking, though it never waukened me wi' its roarin', that there has been an awfu' wind in the nicht, tossing and dashing the shaws thegither; and that that accounts for sic a bonny field, as this was yesterday, being as ye see it now, the shaws a' wallowed, and the leaves growin' a' black."

This theory might be ingenious, but it could not be true; since, had such a hurricane as it supposed struck the turrets of the old mansion house, howling in the chimneys and roaring amid the trees around, it must certainly have wakened us, and sounder sleepers too. So, dissatisfied with the explanation, I returned to mention the circumstance to my host at the breakfast-table, and discuss its probable causes; and how was our wonder increased on learning from the newspapers the day thereafter, that that same night, perhaps in the same hour, perhaps at the same moment, the potato-fields of the whole country, had been struck—north, south, east, and west. It was, in fact, what we afterwards became too familiar with—the potato disease; a severe pestilence of its kind, and one on which gaunt famine followed, though not marching with its strides—in Ireland espe-

cially, emptying her cabins, and filling her churchyards. The country did not sit down supinely under this calamity. While much was done to alleviate the sufferings it entailed—Parliament voting the ten millions sterling for that purpose—every effort was made to discover the nature of the disease ; its causes, and its cure. Farmers tried all manner of experiments, even bringing the potato in its native state from its birthplace on the slopes of Chili and Peru ; the Government instituted all manner of inquiries ; and philosophers turned all the lights of science on the mystery. The country was as wise at the end of the day as at the beginning. These black spots on the green leaf, these black spots in the root ; how the disease came, and how it went ; how it was generated and how propagated ; what might prevent, or arrest, or, if anything could do so, cure it, were subjects that baffled man's utmost skill. God left us to be baffled and beaten, to feel ourselves as powerless and helpless as a straw borne on the bosom of a stream. But when He had taught us to bow reverently and humbly beneath His hand, and to feel that we were in it for good or evil, He was pleased to take it off. The pest was arrested, though enough of it remains to remind us of our dependence on God : departing as mysteriously as it came, through no efforts on our part, nor power or will but His who says to the sea, " Hither shalt thou come and no further ; here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

There was another and earlier pest which I have too good occasion to remember, that also reminds us of these words. " When thy judgments are on the earth, the in-

habitants of the world will learn righteousness." It is not the cholera, now again threatening our shores, to which I refer. It raged, and slew many, in the immediate neighbourhood of my old country parish ; where, while trusting to the power of prayer, we did not, as some of our would-be philosophers seem to fancy we would, neglect the use of means. On the contrary, we established a *cordon sanitaire* around our bounds ; we appointed a committee of public health ; we stopped all beggars, tinkers, vagrants, on the frontiers ; we got a medicine chest for the use of the parish ; we placed it in the manse, out of which, having learned late on a Sabbath night that a person had come that evening to the village from an infected house in Dundee, I went forth at six o'clock on Monday morning, and summoning the nearest members of committee, had the intruder bundled out of his father's house and the parish too before breakfast. We do not need men who regard themselves as "advanced thinkers," and talk with an air of superior wisdom of the modes of thought of the present day, to tell us that we must work as well as pray. It is long since Oliver Cromwell told his Ironsides to trust in God and keep their powder dry.

The pest I refer to is the Influenza of 1836-37. No place could be more healthily situated than Arbirlot, my old country parish. Disease found no allies there in crowded houses, or a stagnant atmosphere ; in marshes, swamps, or the poisonous effluvia of choked drains and cesspools. Arbirlot hung on a slope that declined gently to the sandy shores of the German Ocean. There was

wood enough to ornament the landscape, but not to intercept the fresh breezes that, curling and cresting the waves, blew landward from the sea, or swept down seaward from heights loaded with the fragrance of mown hay, or blooming bean-fields, or moors golden with the flowers of the gorse. The habits, as well as the habitations, of my parishioners were highly conducive to health. Well-instructed, decent, and sober, out of a population amounting nearly to 1000 souls there was only one person who was not in the habit of attending public worship ; only one old enough to be able to read, who could not ; and not one, with the exception of a farmer or two, who was addicted to habits of intemperance. Nevertheless, the influenza of 1836-37, which, I have been told, clothed the Edinburgh churches in all but universal mourning, and made such demands on the leading physicians there, that Dr. Abercrombie was said to have worn out some pairs of horses per day, came down on my parish with the swoop of an eagle. How and whence it came, none could tell ; but all of a sudden, and in almost every house, it was there—"the pestilence that walketh in darkness, the destruction that wasteth at noon-day."

For example, on being myself smitten down on a Friday, I sent off a servant next day on horseback to the farm-houses and hamlets, to warn all that there would be no service in the church on Sabbath : and I remember how he reported on his return the same answer from almost every house—this, namely, It is of no consequence ! The disease was there ; and none could go to

church ! Nor was it only in this parish that the pest had burst out like a fire. The same had happened in the whole country round, shutting up on that Sunday ten or eleven of the pulpits of the thirteen parishes embraced within the bounds of the Presbytery. It had attacked all classes, all ranks, and all ages ; perilling the lives of the young, and slaughtering the old. How it was generated ; how it was communicated ; what made it a destroying angel, moving on the wings of the wind, and armed with the dart of death ; how it smote this house, and, as if it were protected with paschal blood, passed over that, were, and are still, mysteries which eluded the closest inquiry. The deeper men went into the subject, it grew the darker. Well if men of science were thereby taught humility, and those who attempted to penetrate the secrets of disease learned to say, "Who can, by searching, find out God ? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection ? It is higher than heaven, what can we do : it is deeper than hell, what can we know : the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea !"

While cholera, hanging on the wing, hovers over our shores, and threatens to revisit us, it has pleased God to send down on our country a new and strange pest. The first which I have mentioned—like the disease that years ago utterly destroyed the vines of Madeira, and, after devastating many parts of Europe, still lingers, as I saw this summer, among the lovely valleys of Piedmont—fell on the vegetable kingdom. The second pest struck at man directly. Nor can it be reasonably doubted that,

but for the superior medical skill, better food, better clothing, better lodging, which, as compared with those of former times, we, in God's good providence, enjoy, that pest, the cholera likewise, and also the plague which in typhus fever is ever smouldering in our large cities, would have proved as fatal as any plague on record—as that which, in the time of Pepys and Defoe, for instance, slew 10,000 in one week in London, when the population of the capital was not a tenth of what it is now; or that, called the *sweating sickness*, whose ravages in my native town, then probably a very small one, for it had been repeatedly burnt to the ground by hostile armies, stand thus rudely recorded on an old memorial stone within the shadow of its cathedral tower:—

1647.

Luna quater crescens
Sexcentos peste peremptos;
Disce mori,—vidit:
Pulvis et umbra sumus.

The third pest, that with which we have now to do, threatens, not our life, indeed, but one of its main supports. The life of man is sustained either by vegetable, or by animal food. Many tribes in tropical countries live entirely on the first; and the savage races who inhabit the Arctic regions, hunting the whale, the walrus, the seal, the Polar bear, subsist exclusively on the second. Now, in our country, situated midway between the equator and the pole, where we subsist both on animal and vegetable food, this rinderpest, or, in plain English, cattle-plague, threatens to break what is to us, therefore,

a staff of life. It is not indeed the first plague, nor so far as its ravages have yet gone, is it the worst, which has desolated our fields and emptied our byres. One different perhaps in its nature, but to the full as deadly in its effects laid our island waste more than a hundred years ago—such its fatality that almost every cattle beast in England died ; one county alone, and that not a large one, losing 20,000 head. The possibility of such ravages by the rinderpest presents a very gloomy prospect, involving enormous loss to our country, widely-extended suffering, and the utter ruin of thousands of families. Already it has wrought very serious ravages. The number of cows in Edinburgh is now not more than a fourth of what it was when the plague broke out here three months ago ; and many expect that every dairy in the city will be cleared out by the new year. The utmost care on the part of farmers to protect their cattle from infection and surround them with everything that could contribute to their health has proved utterly unavailing. Defying all prevention, and as yet resisting all cure, the disease is working dreadful havoc in many districts of the country. Men are at their wits' end. Ruin stares them in the face, and the calamity which, unless arrested, will fall so heavily on the large and respectable class engaged in agriculture, will be felt by the whole community ; this being a case in which, if one member suffer, all the members must suffer with it. A serious evil to our nurseries, milk, the very best food for children, will not be procurable either for love or money ; and butcher meat, which is

consumed to so large an extent by all classes, must rise to a price which will place it beyond the reach of the labouring population, and many more besides. Such being our prospects, winter approaches us with a stern and gloomy aspect—suffering to all, to many bankruptcy and ruin in its train. So serious, indeed, are the circumstances of the country, that we should stand in dread of their issues, but that we believe in a presiding Providence and can trust to the efficacy of prayer.

What has Providence to do with this pest? is a question which some may put; and I might, with more reason, answer thus: Providence has to do with everything; a sparrow falleth not to the ground without the Father. But I can lay my finger on many passages of the Bible which in other ages (and why not in this?) trace calamities similar to ours to the hand and judgment of God. It was of the loss of his cattle, as well as of his children, that Job uttered this sublimest of all human utterances, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Let God give our farmers a sense of His Providence in this calamity, with faith in the efficacy of prayer, and they may (not otherwise) rise to the height of this sublime expression, “Though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.” I can give but a sample of the many instances which are piled up around me where the Word of God represents Him as sending such calamities as this plague of the rinder-

pest. Hence, and on the highest authority, we call it a providential visitation, which may, or which may not, be sent on account of our sins.

As samples take these : Jeremiah xii. 4, "How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the *beasts* are consumed." Jeremiah vii. 17—20, "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto their gods; therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place upon man, and upon *beast*." Hosea iv. 1—3, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the *beasts* of the field."

It is the fashion with some in these, as in other days, to explain away all, not only that devout Christians, but even devout pagans, held and expressed by such words as Providence and providential. According to them, all events result from certain great, general laws which God has ordained for the government of the world. A man, for example, leaves a warm room without his great-coat,

and catches cold ; drinks too much wine, and loses his senses ; eats too much food, and gets a fit of indigestion ; launches recklessly into speculation, and becomes a bankrupt ; lives in an ill-drained house, and is seized with typhoid fever, and neglecting the use of the proper remedies, dies. Well, we have men who claim to themselves the title of "advanced thinkers," alleging that there is no more Providence in the most important events in the history of individuals, nations, or Churches, than in these—that the fall of a kingdom, with all its results, is not one whit more providential than that of a stone on the hill-side, which when the rains have undermined it, obeying the laws of gravitation, topples over ; and rolling, thundering, smoking, leaping in its descent, at one great last bound buries itself in the depths of the lake.

No doubt many events, which good men once regarded as special interpositions of Providence, can be proved to be the natural and inevitable result of those laws which God has established for the ordinary government of the world. I admit that no rash attempt should be made to trace in the common detail of worldly affairs the special interference of a superintending Providence ; sincere and pious Christians having, sometimes, thereby exposed religion to the sneer of the scoffer, and overlooked this canon even of a heathen poet :—

*Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit ;*

"Let not a god interfere unless some difficulty worthy of his intervention should occur." That God has esta-

blished great general laws for the government of the world, on due attention to which our health, happiness, and life ordinarily turn—laws which cannot be observed without benefit, nor violated without suffering—is no new discovery. We hear much, and not too much certainly, of the importance of sanitary measures; but the fact that filth is favourable to the production of disease, while cleanliness promotes health and prolongs life, was as well known to the Jews three thousand years ago as it is now—the frequent washings enjoined by the Mosaic law, both of their persons and their houses, being sanitary measures as well as spiritual and religious symbols. Nor did the Presbytery of Glasgow, when they proposed a day of humiliation and prayer on account of the cholera, need a late Prime Minister to tell them to betake themselves to the cleaning of their dirty closes and courts, as a measure not less necessary than prayer. The laugh which his taunt afforded sceptics and scoffers was as silly, as the taunt itself was uncalled for—the Sacred Book, which it was the duty of that reverend body to expound, not only containing the oldest, and what is in some respects still the best, sanitary code on record, but furnishing them with a very pertinent, and what had been in the circumstances not impertinent, reply to the statesman's jibe, "These ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone."

Frankly admitting the existence of great general laws, we recognise in them the wisdom and goodness of Him who governs all events, from the fall of an angel to the fall of a sparrow. If fire, for instance, sometimes burned,

and at other times froze, like ice ; if meat sometimes acted like medicine, and medicine like meat ; if the processes of agriculture yielded a crop on one farm, but utterly failed to do so on another ; if "the hand of the diligent" made one man rich, but left his neighbour poor ; if, in other words, certain causes were not followed up by certain results, if the line of sequences could not be depended on, the business of the world would come to a stand—all things would rush into ruin. Admitting this, it by no means follows that, as a man leaves a clock, which he has wound up, to go on in its corner of hall or room, pointing the hours and striking them till the weights have run down, and all is still, and it has run its course, God has left man to run out his term of life, and the world to run on through its cycle of ages under the blind, unmodified, and uncontrolled operation of mere general laws. We admit their existence and see in them the clearest manifestation of the wisdom and goodness, as well as the power, of God. But it by no means follows that, in ways beyond the reach of our discovery and even the comprehension of our limited faculties, ways which we have no language to express, nor intelligence to understand, nor even fancy to imagine, God does not govern our actions and mould our fortunes. How is this truth embodied in the words which we find enshrined in the Bible, and often illustrated in the disappointments of life, and the experience of others as well as Solomon, "I returned, and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor

yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill."

Granting the existence and operation of these laws, and that sincere and devout Christians have often regarded what were their results as "special providences," there are few men who cannot point to certain events in their own life which had an important influence on their own fortune or that of others, and which they cannot but regard as providential. They are not to be explained by the ordinary operation of the laws of nature. Without drawing on books, it may entertain my readers more, and equally illustrate my subject, to relate a case or two of the kind belonging to my own individual experience.

Near by my old country parish there rose from the shelving shore a range of iron-bound cliffs, against which, in stormy weather, the sea dashed with amazing fury. Accompanied by a friend, I one day descended these, in search of anemones and seaweed in the pools which the ebbing tide left at their feet. While thus engaged, I leaped down on a rock that sloped away into the sea, then roaring and foaming in a strong north-easter. On my feet touching the rock, which was covered, not, as I imagined, with dry, but with slippery, seaweed, they went out from below me, and I found myself flat on my back, launching away into the sea. All the danger of the position flashed at once into view—the impossibility of swimming, though I could swim, in such a roaring surf; a horrid death by being hurled on the jagged rocks; and the certainty that, though I should get hold of the slippery *tangle*, of its sliding from my grasp, and

leaving me to fall back again, wounded and bleeding, into the deep. My companion could do nothing, but stood petrified at the sight. Yet I was saved to write this paper, and do some little work in the world, by—what I believe, and, looking our modern philosophers in the face, call—God's good Providence. It had been a miracle, had a monster of the deep swallowed up a man in such circumstances, and, making for a sandy bay, vomited him ashore, safe and sound, as Jonah ; a miracle, had the sea-birds that soared and screamed over the intruder on their domain, borne him aloft on their white wings to set him down safe on the top of the cliffs. The age of miracles is gone ; but not that of the special providence which brings about events where reason can, and religion delights to, recognise the hand of God. In my circumstances, when I was moving off like a ship from the slips into the deep, life only could be saved by the arrest of such a fatal launch. For this purpose I put on the brakes, to use railway language, pressing strongly with my heels against the rock ; and, when descending with constantly accelerating motion—my back to the rock, my face to the sky, my ears filled with the roar of death, and my feet within less than a yard of a watery grave—I was suddenly arrested. It so happened that the heels of my boots had been newly shod with iron. Being rough, one of them, instead of slipping over, caught against a small pebble imbedded in the rock ; and I have ever regarded it as a special providence that, in this hour of peril, I had in that rough iron the only means which could save life ; and that my

mind, being kept as calm and collected as it is now, I had the self-possession to remember the rough state of the iron on my boots, and resort to the one only possible means of saving me from a watery grave.

The scene of another case lies in my own country parish, and the dell where a decent widow lived, whom I was in the habit of visiting, as paralysis made it impossible for her to attend church. She was tended by a very dutiful daughter, who, working at a flax-mill in the neighbourhood, toiled hard, and contented herself with plain dress and simple fare, that she might help to maintain her mother. Before leaving the cottage for her work she was in the habit of heaping up the *refuse* of the mill in the grate; and kindling it. She placed her helpless mother in a chair right before the fire; and as this fuel burned away slowly the old woman was kept comfortable till her return. It happened one day that I left my manse, and skirting the walls of the old churchyard, and passing the corn-mill, with its busy sound and flashing wheel, I took my way down the winding dell to the cottage of the old woman, which stood in its garden, embowered among trees. But, having met a parishioner, with whom I had some subject of interest to talk about, I called a halt; and, sitting down on a bank of thyme, we entered into conversation. Ere the subject was half exhausted, the widow rose to my recollection, I felt somehow that I must cut short, and hasten away on my visit. But the idea was dismissed, and the conversation went on. However, it occurred again, and again, till with a feeling that I was neglecting a call of duty, as by

an uncontrollable impulse I rose to my feet, and made all haste to the cottage. Opening the door, a sight met my eyes that for the moment nailed me to the spot.

The erection of mill-refuse which had been built from the hearth some feet up the wide open chimney, having its foundations eaten away, had fallen, and, precipitating itself forward, surrounded the helpless paralytic within a circle of fire. The accident took place some minutes before I entered. She had cried out, but no ear was there to hear, nor hand to help. Catching the loose refuse around her, on and on, nearer and nearer, the flames crept. It was a terrible sight for the two Wigtown women-martyrs, staked far out in the sands of the Solway Firth, to mark the sea-foam crawl nearer and nearer them; it was more terrible still for this lone woman in her lone cottage, without any great cause to die for, to sit there, and see the fire creeping closer, drawing nearer and nearer to her feet. By the time I entered, it had almost reached her, where she sat motionless, speechless, pale as death, looking down on the fire as it was about to seize her clothes, and burn her to a cinder. Ere it caught, I had time, and no more, to make one bound from the door to the hearth-stone; and seizing her, chair and all in my arms, to pluck her from the jaws of a cruel, fiery death.

Here we recognise the ordinary laws of nature—those of fire, which kept alive by the oxygen of the atmosphere, consumed the refuse; that of gravitation, which, when the fire had ate away the foundation, and left it top-heavy, tumbled it on the floor; that of impulse, by

which, when it fell, it was projected beyond the hearth-stone to surround the paralytic with the flaming circle. But by what law of nature was I moved that day, instead of visiting other sick, to turn my steps to the dell and cottage of this poor old woman? By what law of nature, when I lingered on the road, was I moved, without the remotest idea of her danger, to cut short, against all my inclinations, an interesting conversation, and hurry on to the house, which I reached just at the very nick of time, —one or two minutes later, the flames had caught her clothes, and I had found her in a blaze of fire? To look on this as a case of special providence, some may regard as superstitious, and denounce as inconsistent with the spirit and philosophy of the age—as a mere relic of the days of ignorance and darkness. I leave them to their cold philosophy, and “science falsely so called.” Be it mine to live and die in the belief of a present, and presiding, as well as personal, God; in the faith which inspired my aged friend to thank Him for her wonderful deliverance, and the boy to explain his calm courage on the roaring deep, in these simple but grand words, “My Father is at the helm.”

Edinburgh was the scene of another case which, a matter not of life or death, but of dying peace, I also count providential. A lady belonging to my congregation, a very lovely Christian—whom I knew to be ill, but not in danger—was dying, on a day that I was dragging myself home, weary and worn-out with long hours of work. It occurred to me, on finding myself near the street where she lived, that I should go and see

her ; but feeling more fit for a sofa than further service, I dismissed the idea, and walked on thinking of the poet's line,—

“The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.”

But the idea occurred again, only to be again dismissed. I said to myself, There is nothing very serious in her case. But it came back again and again. Yet I resolved to shake off this feeling, and, walking over it, make my way home ; and I had actually passed the opening of the street where she lived, when the impression returned with irresistible force ; and, surprised by the circumstance, I retraced my steps, and turned them to her house. How was I astonished to be met at the door with the news that she was dying ; and how great was my astonishment and grief also, to find this best and brightest of saintly women in deep despondency. A dark cloud hung over that blessed soul ; it was like the obscuration over the Saviour's cross ; and I seemed to hear that awful cry, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? There we were—she struggling with death, and I with her despair. It pleased God so to bless the truth I was sent, as I believe, to set before her, so to hear the prayers her afflicted and astonished mother and I offered up, that ere her sun sank in night, it came forth from the cloud brilliant, and to appearance larger than ever. Death in the dark had made no eventual difference to this true and loving follower of the Lamb of God ; but the lifting of the cloud, turning her latter end into peace, made a mighty difference to the mourners around her bed, and especially to her eminently

devout and pious mother. She who had been left, like many other ministers' widows, to struggle with poverty and privation, had been borne up, as few have been, by her remarkable faith in a presiding providence. That venerable woman saw God's hand in everything. Her Father had done this; and her Father had sent that. And for myself, I wish that I had the same ever-present, magnanimous, holy trust in God's providence, as bore her through a sea of troubles, and made her regard me that day as sent to do an angel's office; to smooth her Jeannie's entrance into a better world—ministering to an heir of salvation.

It is not always, I admit, easy to distinguish the merely marvellous from the providential, nor the providential from the miraculous; and many things which sincere and pious Christians have fondly considered as special interpositions of Providence; may, I grant, admit of much controversy. But to regard all events as but the result of the common laws of nature, is in effect to shut God out from the government of his own world. To represent him as standing by, a mere spectator, with his hands, so to speak, tied, so that He can neither interpose to confer blessings nor inflict judgments, is to mock Him with the shadow of a kingly crown, and clip the wings by which, lifting us above the cloudy regions of care and doubt, prayer raises us to the skies. It may be in a way unknown to, and inscrutable by, us, but unless God interposing takes an actual and active part in our fate and fortunes, I see no sense in prayer.

Rushing into regions where man loses himself and

reason fails to guide his faltering steps, some, like those of old, who by wisdom knew not God, set forth crude and ill-digested notions which they dignify by the name of philosophy. But however ingeniously it be spun out of their brains, that philosophy must be false which is not only contrary to the plain sense of the Word of God, but is also, and not less, contrary to the universal instinct and promptings of our nature. I could stand on that alone. If the soul is not immortal, why do all men yearn for, and believe in, immortality? If prayer has no real, direct efficacy, why do all nations, civilised and savage, pagan as well as Christian, resort to it for relief; and, as we see in the case of the lowest and most debased heathens, rather than not pray, address their petitions to a stock or stone? It seems as much an instinct for man in want to pray, as for an infant, put to the breast, to suck. And He who inspired the instinct is no more in this case than in that "a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent."

As to the *modus operandi* of prayer, as to how it works, and moves the hand that moves the world, that is a subject into which man with his limited faculties cannot too reverently enter, and about which the profoundest theologians cannot too modestly speak. As Cowper sings—

" God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

But, as even nature teaches, and his Word clearly reveals, He will have all men to pray; and, to use the

words of an inspired Apostle, "no respecter of persons, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Therefore, while we acknowledge an Almighty hand in the pest which, marching ruthless and meanwhile resistless through the land, is destroying our herds, ruining the fortunes of many, and threatening the comforts of all, let us resort to prayer. Along with the utmost vigilance and the use of the most active means to stop the progress of the plague, and effect its cure, let prayer ascend from all our cities, our scattered villages, and country homesteads. And who can tell but that God, notwithstanding our unworthiness, may repent Him of the evil ; and a grateful nation, rising from the ground where prince and peasant had bent before his mighty hand, may soon unite all voices in this grand old chorus : "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness : and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness ; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn ; they shout for joy ; they also sing."

WATCH-NIGHT.

Half-past twelve, A.M., 1st January, 1866.



HAVE just returned from holding "Watch-night" with a congregation of Wesleyan Methodists. Never having witnessed its services, perhaps ignorant even of the existence of such a custom, many of my readers may be ready to ask, "Watch-night, what is it?" If Churches knew each other better, it might promote their mutual improvement, and also the interests of brotherly kindness and Christian charity. With this view I shall tell my readers something of the very impressive and solemn service, called Watch-night, with which, standing on the line that parts them, the Wesleyans take farewell of the old year and hail the advent of the new.

It is a fact, though by many sound Protestants and Christians who observe them never so much as supposed, that some of our old customs had their origin in Popish, others in older and Pagan times. Let me relate two remarkable examples of this which I saw some years ago when making a tour in the north and north-west of Scotland.

In Loch Maree, where, next to Switzerland, the exquisite beauty of the lake, and the magnificent mountains that frame it, raise one's mind from nature up to nature's God, there is an island—one of the many that lie like gems on its bosom—which once boasted a well of healing virtues. Till the Saint whose name it bears took offence at a man who dipped a favourite dog into it to cure him of madness, its waters, so say the people, were a panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir. On being so profaned, the well, which owed its miraculous virtues to the merits of the Saint, became dry. Partly in consequence of this belief, and partly in consequence of the progress of education, it has now ceased to be resorted to ; but a tree which stands by it, proves to what a late period this old popish superstition retained its hold of this Protestant and Presbyterian district. It presents a sight one would expect to meet only in benighted Ireland. I saw the branches that hang over the empty well covered with votive offerings—a relic of Popery among a people who would have been as loth to trust in the merits of a dead **saint**, as in the demerits of a living sinner.

Such another well, but associated with an older time, stands near by the house of Culloden in Inverness-shire. Its waters at a certain period of the year, like those of the Pool of Siloam at the descent of the angel, were believed to acquire a miraculous virtue. This was on the first Sunday of the month of May. On the morning of that day, hundreds resorted to it, either to drink and be themselves cured, or drawing water, and taking care that

not a drop was spilt lest the charm should be broken, to carry it to sick and bed-ridden friends. May was a month sacred to the god of the sun ; that being the period when Baal's rites were performed by our rude and savage ancestors, long before the introduction of Christianity. Though our country has no sturdier Protestants, or people who have a higher regard for the Sabbath, than the inhabitants of the surrounding district, down to a recent period crowds of them resorted to this old pagan well. I found many votive offerings on a tree which drooped over it—in buttons and copper coins that were stuck in its bark ; and worsted threads, bits of cloth and ribbons of all colours that hung fluttering from its boughs. From these wells, whence I drew no water, I drew a lesson of charity. The strong hold which these old popish and even pagan superstitions long continued to maintain over a devout and serious people, taught me to wonder less that churches should retain, on the one hand, forms which, though they have no sanction in Scripture, are of a venerable antiquity : and reject, on the other hand, improvements in the services of public worship, merely because they are innovations on old-established customs.

How long, like the remnants of the Hittites, Perizzites, and Canaanites in the land of Israel, heathen customs will survive in a Christian country, has no more remarkable illustration than those supply which, in strong contrast to the Methodist "Watch-night," usher in the year. Little do good Christians, when they take part in these, think that they are engaged in pagan rites. But

so it is. For example, on the last night of the year the ancient Druids went forth in solemn procession ; the high priest at their head carrying a golden bill-hook or sickle. Reverently approaching the sacred oak, he cut the mistletoe from its gnarled boughs ; and this, being brought into the towns and carried to the houses of their chiefs, was distributed among the people. Cut down on the proper night with golden instrument and by priestly hands, this curious parasite became sacred to their god, and acquired the virtues of a potent charm. As such it was hung up in the rafters to preserve their houses from evil, and worn also as an amulet to protect their persons on the field of battle. And now, in the nineteenth century, a thousand years and more after heathenism had disappeared, in a country of bibles, churches, schools, and sabbaths, here we are in the use of the mistletoe that at Christmas and New Year's time garnishes our houses and looks down on happy meetings of gathered families and loving friends, observing an old pagan rite. The term "Yule," and the cry "Hogmanay" with which our boyhood was familiar at New Year's time, and which is of universal usage, at least in Scotland, are both relics of heathenism—it being by this cry that the people were summoned to the sacrifices of their god, and to his festival, which they celebrated with revels and universal conviviality. We might wonder why a period of the year specially calculated to excite solemn and serious thoughts should ever have been set apart for entertainments calculated rather to dissipate than excite such thoughts, and for convivial indulgences which often equalled, perhaps

exceeded, in their drunken excesses those of heathenism. But this accounts for it. Nor is it difficult to explain how these and also other customs survived the pagan worship to which they originally belonged. It is well known that the term Easter is taken from the worship of the old goddess Astarte, or Ashtaroth : it is equally well-known that the robes of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and very many of the forms through which they go, were copied from those of heathen temples ; and the door by which these and other corruptions came into the Christian Church, was the well-intended but unwise policy of her early missionaries. They sought to convert the heathen by accommodating the new worship to the seasons and fashions of the old. **Impatient**, animated by zeal, but in many instances zeal **without knowledge**, the good men who found it difficult to abolish the pagan rites and forgot that "he who believeth shall not make haste," endeavoured to give them a Christian turn. So, finding it hard to wean the people from their old habit of cutting the mistletoe, they sought to baptize it to Christianity, and to win or please converts by hanging it up in their churches ; while they winked at, if they did not encourage, the feasting and banqueting, the eating and drinking, the fun and folly, with which the pagans at **New Year's** time celebrated the festival of their god.

It was not long ere the Church found out her mistake, in acting on expediency rather than on principle. The feasting and merriment which, for the purpose of reconciling them to Christianity, she allowed her converts to continue indulging in at **New Year's** time, reached a **vast**

height in France, for instance. Strong complaints were made to the Gallic Synods of great excesses being committed on the last night of the old and the first of the new year. It appears that companies of both sexes, dressed in fantastic habits, and called *bachelettes* or *guisarts*, ran about the streets, and entered even the churches, disturbing the devotion of the worshippers. Crying, "Au gui menez, Tire-lire-Mainte du blanc et point du bis," they demanded both money and wassail. This will recall to Scotchmen (I know not if to Englishmen also) the name of *guizards*, given to those who in our early days went about painted and masked, singing songs, and also their cry, "Give us your white bread and none of your grey?" The Bishop of Angres, who says that the cries of the *guisarts* were derived from the ancient Druids, makes grievous complaints of the licentiousness of the people at New Year's time. To such an extent indeed was their bacchanalianism carried in his day, that the French Government had to step forward and repress it by the strong arm of the law.

This history teaches us, as do many things else, that there is no reformation so good in its ultimate results as what our fathers called a "root-and-branch" one. To win over the heathen, by removing impediments which interpose between them and Christianity, some missionaries in our day have lent a sort of sanction to polygamy, and permitted their converts to continue practices that properly belong to idolatry. And when we see good men even now persuading themselves that such measures are lawful, need we wonder that in earlier and less

enlightened times the apostles of Northern Europe endeavoured to compromise matters by engrafting the new religion on some portions of the old? Compromises in worldly affairs which involve no question of truth and principle, cannot be too much commended. In moral and religious matters, they cannot be too strongly condemned. Let the Churches beware of establishing any such truce between truth and falsehood. Many of these are separated on what might be called points rather than principles; on matters of remote and doubtful inference rather than of plain and direct revelation. But though I therefore think that union among Protestant denominations is not only exceedingly desirable, but much more attainable than many suppose, yet no scheme toward it, toward the conversion of the heathen, or toward reconciling worldly men to religion, to Christ and his cross, should be entertained that involves the smallest compromise either of the doctrines or the morals of our holy faith. This were to sew a piece of new cloth into an old garment, to pour new wine into old bottles.

Though I have traced the peculiar and convivial customs of the new year to paganism, I should be sorry that any one supposed that I regard otherwise than with favour the kindly greetings and gifts, the family gatherings and innocent convivialities, which make the shortest among the happiest days of the year. Happy the homes where songs as well as psalms drown the roaring of the storm, and affection and mirth diffuse such light and warmth within the house as to make us forget the biting cold and darkness without. In foretelling the return of God's

banished people, Jeremiah says that "in all their dwellings shall be heard the voice of thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry," and so should our homes be, when, saying with the poet—

"I saw the skirts of the departing year,"

we hail the advent of its successor. But it is sad to take farewell of the old year without any grateful remembrance of its mercies, and sorrowful thought of its sins; to have the mirth without the thanksgiving; and reckless of the temptations, and trials, and sorrows, and difficulties and deaths the new year may bring, to allow that to run into excess, and our convivialities into debauchery. The time is one for enjoyment; but not certainly more for enjoyment than for suitable reflections on the past, and good resolutions for the future. And it is shocking to see these drowned in the drinking-bowl—the voice of conscience lost in riot and uproar!

But without anxious and even prayerful care, the customs of the season were very apt to lead to excess. For instance, in the old times in England, the head of the house assembled his family round a bowl of spiced ale, and drinking their healths, handed it round to the others,—every one as he lifted the bowl saying in good old Saxon, "Waes hael, or "To your health;" an expression in which we find the origin of the word *wassail*,—the wassail-bowl. A similar custom prevailed, and to some extent still prevails, in Scotland. When the clock struck twelve the members of the family drank to each other's health in the *hot pint*, as it was called; following this up

with dances and mirth and merry-making. Nor was this all ; it was succeeded by what proved a much greater temptation to sobriety and virtue. Carrying this bowl, replenished with ale and spices, they sallied forth to visit their neighbours, entering each house with uproarious cheers, and exchanging friendly greetings in drink given and received. A very common result of this *first footing*, as it was called, and of the drink besides friendly greetings which they exchanged with all whom they encountered on the road, was that ere the new year had almost begun, conviviality had run into riot, and brutal drunkenness lay in the gutters, or went staggering along the streets. And, though the habits of this age are a great improvement on former times—not indeed because the whisky-bottle has been substituted for the *hot pint*—our towns still present many disgraceful spectacles at New Year's time. In walking the streets of Edinburgh how have I been filled with disgust and sorrow !—thankful, however, that it was not the season when foreigners visited the city, else we must have blushed for our country and its religion as we looked them in the face.

Edinburgh, more perhaps than any other place, used to celebrate the New Year with Saturnalian rites. The principal streets were more thronged between twelve and one o'clock on New Year's Day morning than at mid-day in the full tide of business ; and, as if to make up for their usually strict and grave, if not stern, demeanour, the people, like a bow too strongly bent and suddenly unbent, sprang into the opposite extreme. Even women relaxed not a little of their usual modesty ;

and grave citizens became bacchanalians. So soon as the Tron Church steeple rang out the midnight hour, a tremendous shout rose and rent the air. At that signal the crowd rushed into the wildest excesses; and orgies were begun, with little distinction of sex, age, or rank, that, traceable to the days of paganism, were a disgrace to Christianity. Happily, this pagan institution, as it might be called, has never recovered from a blow it received some fifty or sixty years ago. The city roughs and blackguards of that time combined together to turn the occasion into one of plunder. The least resistance offered them was met by assaults, so violent and bloody that in several instances they resulted in death. Justice had to draw her sword: and the end of the Saturnalia was a spectacle which filled the city with pity, and grief, and horror. Three boys who had been engaged in the robberies and violences of that night, were brought out to the scaffold, and hanged up in the face of the sun. The stern and terrible lesson was not lost. These three young corpses, turning slowly in the wind, made an indelible impression on the mind of Edinburgh; and as the drunken orgies of the season have ever since then been checked—we cannot say altogether eradicated—the event was one of many which show how God in his providence makes good spring out of evil, and crime find a cure in its own excesses.

Whether it was for the purpose of checking the excesses of this season by a better and more Christian way, that John Wesley established a "Watch-night" at New Year's time, I know not. Probably it was. The revival

among the Methodists of this very ancient custom was not due, however, to the new year, or to its excesses. The earliest notice of it in Wesley's Journal is in these terms — "Friday, *Jan. 9, 1742.*—We had the first watch-night in London. We commonly choose for this solemn service the Friday night nearest the full moon, either before or after, that those of the congregation who live at a distance may have light to their several homes. The service begins at half an hour past eight, and continues till a little after midnight. We have often found a peculiar blessing at these seasons. There is generally a deep awe upon the congregation, perhaps in some measure owing to the silence of the night, particularly in singing the hymn with which we commonly conclude—

‘Hearken to the solemn voice,
The awful midnight cry!
Waiting souls, rejoice, rejoice,
And feel the Bridegroom nigh.’”

Elsewhere he writes, "About this time I was informed that several persons in Kingswood frequently met together at the school; and, when they could spare the time, spent the greater part of the night in prayer and praise and thanksgiving. Some advised me to put an end to this; but upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more general use. So I sent them word, I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again. I gave public notice of this the Sunday

before, and withal, that I intended to preach ; desiring that they, and they only, would meet me there who could do it without prejudice to their business or families. On Friday abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine, and we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God. This we have continued to do once a month ever since in Bristol, London, and Newcastle, as well as Kingswood ; and exceeding great are the blessings we have found therein : it has generally been an extremely solemn season, when the word of God sank deep into the heart even of those who till then knew Him not. If it be said, ‘This was only owing to the novelty of the thing (the circumstance which still draws such multitudes together at those seasons), or perhaps to the awful silence of the night,’ I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so : however, the impression then made on many souls has never been effaced. Now, allowing that God did make use either of the novelty or any other indifferent circumstance in order to bring sinners to repentance, yet they are brought. And herein let us rejoice together. Nay, may I not put the case farther yet? If I can probably conjecture that, either by the novelty of this ancient custom, or by any other indifferent circumstance, it is in my power to ‘save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins,’ am I clear before God if I do it not?—if I do not snatch that brand out of the burning?”

“Sir,” says Wesley elsewhere, in repelling the attack of a Rev. Mr. Baily of Cork, “you charge me with hold-

ing ‘midnight assemblies.’ Sir, did you never see the word ‘Vigil’ in your Common Prayer Book? Do you know what it means? If not, permit me to tell you, that it was customary with the ancient Christians to spend whole nights in prayer; and that these nights were termed *Vigilæ*, or Vigils. Therefore, for spending a part of some nights in this manner, in public and solemn prayer, we have not only the authority of our national Church, but of the universal Church in the earliest ages.”

So wrote John Wesley. To those who blamed him for setting his hymns to tunes that, though of great merit, were in many cases associated with profane songs, he had replied, “I see no reason why the devil should have all the good music.” No wonder that this same man, like soldiers who dash boldly on a park of artillery to seize it and turn on the enemy their own guns, should conceive and carry out the idea of turning a night of debauchery into one of devotion—at least of such services as would by God’s blessing guard people from excess, and teach them to join trembling with their mirth. Wise in his generation as the children of this world in theirs, Wesley did not think it enough simply to denounce the drinking and debauchery of the time. He knew human nature better. He was not ignorant of the principle which Dr. Chalmers illustrates in one of his noblest sermons, this, namely, “the expulsive power of a new affection.” So, without attempting to altogether abolish an old custom, he said, By all means celebrate the advent of the New Year, not, however, with the

dissipation of pagans, but the devotion of Christians. And in this exercise we resolved to take part, with a congregation of his followers, on the last night of 1865.

We repaired to their chapel a little after ten o'clock. The riot of the streets had already begun; and it was a great relief to escape from them, and find ourselves quietly seated amidst a congregation whose countenances, as became their position, bore a mingled expression of happiness and solemnity. It was pleasant to see so large an assembly on such a night and at such an hour; and to recognise numbers who though, like ourselves, belonging to another than the Wesleyan communion, had gone to unite with their brethren of that Church in the solemn, striking service which I proceed to describe.

The minister appeared in the pulpit punctually at half-past ten, robed in gown and bands—a costume, by the way, not used by the Methodists in England, though their Conference has too much good sense to quarrel with its use in Scotland, or to insist in such minor matters on a rigid and unnatural uniformity. He began the services by reading out a hymn, which the people sang with Methodist spirit to the music of an organ. The full burst of their earnest and ringing voices all but drowned the sound of its pipes, and demonstrated that an organ, whatever objections people may have to instrumental music as an aid to psalm singing, does not always, and need never, supersede or interfere with vocal praise—the song of grateful hearts rising from hallowed lips. They sang:—

- “ Jesus the Conqueror reigns,
In glorious strength arrayed,
His kingdom over all maintains,
And bids the earth be glad.
- “ Ye sons of men, rejoice
In Jesu’s mighty love;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice,
To Him Who rules above.
- “ Extol His kingly power;
Kiss the exalted Son,
Who died, and lives to die no more,
High on His Father’s throne.
- “ Our Advocate with God,
He undertakes our cause,
And spreads thro’ all the earth abroad
The victory of His cross.
- “ That bloody banner see,
And in your Captain’s sight,
Fight the good fight of faith with me—
My fellow-soldiers, fight!”

After this, Mr. James, the minister, offered up a very impressive prayer, acknowledging the mercies and also the sins of the past year—seeking grateful hearts and pardon through the blood of Christ—in view of the year about to enter, renewing vows and dedications to God, with earnest prayer for grace to do its duties, to meet its trials, to resist its temptations, to bear its burdens and to be ready for the deaths it might bring. Another hymn was then sung, and the 90th Psalm, beginning with these words: “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations,” read,—and read impressively. After the congregation had again sung, the minister

choosing for his subject those words of I. Samuel vii. 12, "Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of Eben-ezer, saying. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," delivered an appropriate address. At its close the congregation sang:—

- " How many pass the guilty night
In revellings and frantic mirth !
The creature is their sole delight,
Their happiness the things of earth;
For us suffice the season past;
We choose the better part at last.
- " We will not close our wakeful eyes,
We will not let our eyelids sleep,
But humbly lift them to the skies
And all a solemn vigil keep:
So many years on sin bestowed,
Can we not watch one night for God ?
- " We can, O Jesus, for Thy sake,
Devote our every hour to Thee:
Speak but the word, our souls shall wake,
And sing with cheerful melody ;
Thy praise shall our glad tongues employ,
And every heart shall dance for joy.
- " O may we all triumphant rise,
With joy upon our heads return,
And far above those nether skies,
By Thee on eagle's wings upborne,
Thro' all yon radiant circles move,
And gain the highest heaven of love !"

The minister now descended, and resigned the pulpit for half an hour to a local preacher; and I may remark, by the way, that his address, directed chiefly in warning

words to young men and women, proved that, though a liberal education is of great value to ministers, he may be an effective speaker who has never been at college. A few minutes before twelve o'clock this worthy man brought his remarks to a close. Mr. James returned to the pulpit ; and having addressed the congregation in a few solemn and weighty words, he said that there were now only some two or three minutes of the old year to run, and these he would recommend them to pass in secret communion with God. Then the whole congregation, following his example, bowed the head, and fell on their knees in silent prayer. During these few minutes an awful solemnity filled the house,—a stillness on which the hour, as it struck one beat on the clock, announcing that one year was gone and another begun, broke with startling effect. At Manchester, where I first witnessed this most impressive service, the effect was still greater. There, the clock rang out its full twelve beats; and as they slowly and solemnly succeeded each other, they sounded like the last dying throbs of the expiring year. So soon as the ringing out the old and ringing in the new year had brought us to the end of one and the beginning of another stage in life's journey, the whole congregation rose to their feet ; and, like men who spring forward anew, on a heavenward race, for a heavenly crown, they burst out into this song:—

“ Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.

His adorable will let us gladly fulfil,
And our talents improve,
By the patience of hope, and the labour of love.

“ Our life is a dream ; our time as a stream
Glides swiftly away ;
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay.
The arrow is flown ; the moment is gone ;
The millennial year
Rushes on to our view, and eternity’s here.

“ O that each in the day of His coming may say,
‘ I have fought my way through,
I have finished the work Thou didst give me to do.’
O that each from his Lord may receive the glad word,
‘ Well and faithfully done ;
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne.’ ”

Ere the echoes of the hymn had died away, the minister rose to pronounce the blessing ; and, the service closed, we went out into the starry night to hear the sound of revelry and riot—but to see nothing incongruous with our devotions in many of the congregation tarrying at the door to salute their acquaintances with a “ Happy New Year ! ” and much hearty shaking of hands.

The most remarkable and impressive feature of this service was perhaps the depth and solemnity of the silence that filled the house, while the congregation engaged in secret prayer during the last moments of the old, dying year. It reminded me of scenes I had witnessed abroad at one of the most solemn parts of Roman Catholic worship. When the priest, after working the miracle of the mass, turns round to hold aloft at the full stretch of his arms, not in bread and wine a symbol of

Christ's body, but, as the people are taught to believe, the very flesh and blood of the Son of God, the effect is quite remarkable. It is exceedingly impressive indeed, if the scene be a vast and noble cathedral, with its lofty **pillars**, and solemn aisles, and dim religious light, and full to the door with thousands of worshippers. At that moment, as if with one soul, the mighty congregation drop on their knees, and every head is bent adoring to the ground. Standing near by the high altar, with the sea of faces before us, it is wonderful to look out over these thousands,—all motionless as statues, amid silence deep as the grave's. There is no such silence outside, in nature ; not on the shore, where in the quietest day wavelets break, and sea-birds scream ; nor in the gloom of the forest, where the wind goes whispering among the branches, and withered leaves fall whirling to the ground ; nor in the loneliest glen, where the distant baying of a watch-dog, the murmur of a hidden stream, the hum of bee or beetle, relieves the silence. Yonder, with their God held on high before prostrate thousands, no sound whatever—rustle of gown, ruffle of moving foot, lowest whisper—falls on the ear. Each one, penetrated with awe, seems to hold his breath—the scene, the deep stillness such as to remind the spectator of these Scriptures, "There was silence in heaven," "I fell at his feet as dead."

"Watch-night" among the Methodists, outraging neither human reason nor God's Word, as the other does, is, even in its outward aspect, not less impressive. At the solemn midnight hour, and on the eve of another

year, the voice of man is stilled ; and, amid the deepest silence, the whole living assembly, each as if he were alone, engages in inward prayer. The time, the place, the awful stillness, the vast multitude around, each holding secret communion with God, presents a scene that might sober a bacchanalian, and move the most indifferent to prayer. And now may I not ask, why should not all other Churches, in the Methodists' new-year's night service, take a leaf out of their book, wherever circumstances render it both practicable and convenient ? The bigotry of Papists is not worse than, or indeed so inexcusable as, that which maintains we have nothing to learn from others in the ordinances of God's house and worship. It were ludicrous, if it was not sad, to find good Protestants who deny infallibility to the Pope, and yet, resisting all change, seem to regard their fathers or themselves as infallible ; and their own old system as so perfect that it is incapable of improvement. What else is that than to say, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we !"

Very seldom have I worshipped with Christians of other denominations, either at home or abroad, with my countrymen, or with foreigners—French, Swiss, Germans, or Italians,—without seeing something in their churches which I would have been happy to engraft on my own. And this is a feeling, I venture to say, common to all who, while enjoying the privilege of worshipping with other denominations, have sought to see in their services not what they might condemn, but might admire and imitate. It is good to be conservative, but not of

defects. In these days of bold attacks, from unexpected quarters, on our most sacred and cherished beliefs, let all on the watchtowers of Zion sound forth, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." But though it is our duty to keep by the *old roads*, it may not be our duty to keep by the *old ruts*. Between old roads and old ruts, there is a great and too much forgotten distinction. What is commendable in Churches other than our own, why should we be such bigots as not to copy? Who can afford to dispense with what other good, intelligent, and pious Christians have found to be aids to devotion? The tide runs strong the other way; and we need to crowd all sail on the mast to advance in grace, and at length arrive in heaven.

To the lateness of these Watch-night services no one can justly object. They occur but once a year; and hours as late are not held a valid objection to balls, to theatres, or even to the occasionally protracted social meetings of such as would frequent neither the one nor the other. Where can we so well take leave of the old year with all its sins to answer for, or enter on the new with all its trials to encounter, as in the House of God? The solemnities of the service are eminently calculated to restrain the excesses of the season. They teach us, what we are prone to forget, amid its festivities to rejoice with trembling. Nor can I doubt were all our congregations, where convenient, to meet after the fashion of the Methodists,—as is done in some Episcopalian

churches in London—many of our people would bless God, and say with Wesley, “EXCEEDING GREAT ARE THE BLESSINGS WE HAVE FOUND THEREIN: IT HAS GENERALLY BEEN AN EXTREMELY SOLEMN SEASON WHERE THE WORD OF GOD SANK DEEP INTO THE HEART.”

THE RECHABITES.

IT is a safe rule to avoid illustrations drawn from ships when preaching at a seaport, or from battle-fields in a garrison, or from pastoral scenes to a congregation of shepherds. The reason of this is obvious. The preacher being much less perfectly acquainted with the subject that furnishes the illustration than his hearers, he is very likely to commit some blunder which the humblest of them can detect ; and by this, expose himself and, what is a much more serious evil, his great theme to contempt. So it once fell out with a friend of mine when occupying a pulpit in the Highlands of Forfarshire. He, not unnaturally, thought that the twenty-third Psalm offered peculiarly suitable topics of discourse to the natives of a glen ; and having a remarkably good opinion of himself, he never doubted, though a dweller in the plains, that with his knowledge of the habits both of shepherds and their sheep, his sermon would prove a success.

It fell out otherwise ; and thus. Among these hills

the temperature even in summer is cold rather than hot : full of springs and streams, their herbage is succulent ; and it is rarely indeed that their pastures, like those of Italy or Palestine, are so burned by long droughts and scorching suns as to remind one of the Bible figure “withered like grass.” This being the case, the sheep of the Grampians are independent of water ; nor, though it is abundantly supplied by loch and dark tarn, dancing streams and green mossy wells where the deer slakes his thirst, do they ever drink—unless, indeed, when they are ill. Ignorant of this, the preacher expatiated on “the still waters” of the Psalm—telling his amazed hearers that the Gospel was as much needed by them as water by their fleecy charges, and exhorting them to seek and enjoy its mercies as they knew their sheep did the river and the mountain streams. Now they knew the reverse of this to be true ; and concluded that the preacher must be very ignorant since he did not know what even their children knew ; and as they lingered to light their pipes by the church-door, he had the mortification, on retiring, to hear himself and his sermon treated with contempt ; one saying to another, *Puir bodie, heard ye ever the like o’ yon about a sheep drinking !*

The habits of the lower animals change to a certain extent with culture and climate. So, indeed, do those of man himself—the natives of hot countries, for example, living chiefly on vegetables, while the Esquimaux, to maintain their vital heat amid the rigours of Greenland, require, as well as use, the fattest animal food—seal, whale, and walrus. So, in consequence of

the dry herbage and great heat, the sheep of those countries which supplied the sacred writers with illustrations, freely use water. There, it is indeed necessary to their health and life. Hence it was that a man one day saw a flock approaching the well where he sat way-worn and weary, in a dry parched land, beneath a burning sun. A common sight that; but not so the guardians of this flock—a sight as beautiful as infrequent, seven shepherdesses; sisters all; in the bloom of youth and womanhood. Hand in hand, with arms around each other's necks, these fair ones approach, perhaps unaware of a stranger's presence; and, drawing, fill the troughs that were there, to water their father's sheep. But ere this was done, some men, for the wells of the East were often common property, arrived with their flocks at the same place for the same purpose; and with more of the selfishness of human nature than the courtesy we are accustomed to associate with Eastern manners, they took unmanly advantage of their superior strength to drive the maidens and their flock aside—an act of rudeness, and of plain injustice also, since not they but the shepherdesses had filled the troughs. A banished man, with a price set on his head, and his thoughts far away in the land where his friends and people wore the chains of a galling slavery, the stranger was probably too much occupied with his own sad reflections to take, in the first instance, much interest in the scene. But this rude injustice and oppression rouses a lion within him: and though it was against great odds—he a foreigner and the shepherds natives—he one and they

many—Moses, for it is he, steps forward ; and with that in his eye, his tones, and bearing that makes the cowards quail and retreat as he advances, he espouses the cause of the weaker party—and rights their wrongs. Fain, but perhaps too modest to ask him to their home, his fair clients content themselves with kind looks and grateful thanks. But full of admiration of his gallant bearing, they relate the whole affair to their father, who instantly sends them back, no unwilling messengers, to invite the stranger to the house—where, conducted by his future wife and her fair train of sisters, Moses found a home. It is to this same house, where he spent forty happy years, that I proceed, to trace the remarkable family whose name stands at the head of this article.

On seeing a girl tending a flock of sheep or herd of cattle, we might conclude that, though presenting with her golden locks, and rosy cheek, and naked feet, a beautiful picture, the nature of her occupation proved the humbleness of her rank. Such an inference would have been wrong in the old times of Scripture. People had more true taste and less false shame in these early days. Laban, for example, was a man of wealth, yet on our first introduction to his daughter, Jacob's future and favourite wife, we find her engaged in the care of her father's flock. "Behold," said the shepherds, speaking of Laban, and directing Jacob's attention to a beautiful maiden who approached them, "Behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep !" But the head of the house to which Moses was conducted, the father of these fair shepherdesses, held a position much superior to

Laban's. Reuel, or Jethro, or Hobab, for he goes by all the three names, appears to have united in himself both the offices of a priest and of a prince in the land of Midian : and thereby affords us a curious and interesting glimpse into the arrangements of society in the patriarchal age. It is probable that at that early period, and among those who, preserving the primitive faith, worshipped one true God, there was no class specially set apart for religious offices—such as the Jews, under the Mosaic dispensation, had in their priests, and we, and all Christian sects, with a few exceptions, have in those called ministers, or clergy. Abraham, for instance, offered sacrifices simply as the head of a family ; so did Jacob ; and where there was a clan or tribe, the honour and responsibility of discharging such sacred functions belonged probably to its chief, who, after a fashion, united Church and State. Melchizedec did so. He was King of Salem, and also a priest of the Most High God ; being honoured and recognised as such on account of his pre-eminent piety throughout the whole land, and by many besides his own subjects. Moses' father-in-law seems to have occupied a similar position. On visiting the Israelites in the wilderness, he offered sacrifice ; and in taking part with him in that holy office, Aaron and the elders of Israel virtually acknowledged what might be called his "holy orders." Moses, his son-in-law, the renowned leader of the Hebrew host, himself inspired of God and endowed by nature with the highest qualities of a statesman, paid Jethro yet higher honours—taking counsel of him, and following his advice as how best

to lighten the burdens of government, dispense justice to the people, and guide the helm of the Commonwealth.

This distinguished man was the ancestor of the Rechabites—a fact which can be plainly made out by bringing together some scattered parts of Scripture history. It is true that Jethro, though he visited Israel on their approaching his territories during their march through the wilderness, and on that occasion restored his wife and two sons to Moses, did not abide with them ; but, taking his departure, bade them farewell, and “went his way into his own land.” A branch of his family, however, who were called Kenites, afterwards joined themselves to the Hebrew nation, and being received into its bosom, became partakers of its privileges—an event which is thus recorded in the first chapter of the book of Joshua :—“And the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad : and they went and dwelt among the people.” Now the Kenites, being the descendants of Jethro, all that is required to prove that he was the ancestor of the Rechabites is to show their identity with these Kenites, and this is done in the last verse of the second chapter of 1 Chronicles, where it is said, “These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.”

I have thus traced the stream to its fountain. Sprung from Jethro, the Rechabites had a noble origin ; and

since it is sometimes with men, as it always is with water, that they rise to the height of the fountain from which they spring, this tribe may have owed somewhat of their superior virtues to their honourable descent. That those who are born of families distinguished for talents and virtue often possess superior properties, is a well-known fact ; one recorded in such proverbial expressions as these, "A hawk out of a good nest," "An ounce of blood is better than a pound of bone." If there is so much, as is known to shepherds and sportsmen, in the breed of dogs and horses, much more may we attach value to the breed of men, among whom we often see the qualities of the heart and head descending, by a law more sure than that of entail, from sire to son through succeeding generations. How much of their noble character the Rechabites owed to their noble descent, it were not easy to tell. But they were under the favourable influences which the connection with old and honourable families naturally exerts on the minds of their representatives. Such families are more than merely ornamental to a country, like the old and picturesque castles they inhabit. The deeds which won fame and fortune for the founder of the house, the hoary traditions of its past history, the memory of a long line of distinguished ancestors—famous in public annals for their patriotism, and in the country around for their generous and noble charities, the feeling of having to maintain the high character of an ancient house, these things do, and cannot fail to exert influences for good which are not felt by families that, growing and perhaps destined to

decay like mushrooms, sprung up but yesterday, without any ancestral traditions to cherish or ancestral honours to maintain.

THE PECULIAR CUSTOMS WHICH THE RECHABITES PRACTISED.

For a long period after being adopted into the family of Israel, those descendants of Jethro who bore the name of Kenites achieved no distinction : but passed through life like the great mass who eat and drink, marry and give in marriage, get quietly, and many of them usefully, through their duties, and then die off ; and, with their memories consigned to the same tomb as their bodies, find no place in story. There was, indeed, one remarkable exception to this, Jael the wife of Heber—she who slew Sisera, the leader of the hosts of Canaan, having enticed him into her tent, and when he slept, with a nail driven through his temples, pinned him dead to the ground. Approve or condemn the part this heroine played in this bloody drama—and for myself I am not prepared either wholly to applaud or wholly to censure her—Heber's wife did a deed that earned for her the thanks of a grateful country, and a place in immortal song. Long years after, on festive and solemn occasions, in cottages where women plied the distaff, and in camps where soldiers met, of her, the pride of her own sex and the envy of the other, they sung, " Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent. He asked water, and she gave him milk ; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the work-

men's hammer ; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down : . . . where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

Jael passes away ; and long centuries thereafter another Kenite, equally distinguished for decision of character, steps on the stage. It is Jonadab the son of Rechab ; and the star of the Kenite is once more in the ascendant. To such a height had his patriotism, and probably his piety, raised this man in public esteem, that Jehu, the executioner of God's wrath on the house of Ahab, courted his favour. Some men's favour is sunshine to a cause—their mere presence ensures success—and the highest testimony to Jonadab's influence is the anxiety Jehu shows to enlist him on his side, and to Jonadab's piety is the argument Jehu urges : "Come," he says, cloaking, as others have done, selfish ends under the appearance of religion, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord !"

There are some who, through the good influences they have exerted, live long after they are dead. It is said of those who die in the Lord that their works do follow them—but while their good works follow them to heaven, they also remain behind them on earth. Indeed, everyone, though only within the walls of a humble cottage, or the narrow limits of a country village, has an influence for good or evil—pebbles as well as rocks, when they fall into a lake, raising circles on its glassy surface ; and it is a solemn thing to think that no man lives, or can

live to himself, without affecting some for weal or woe. But from time to time, once in a century or so—as might be expected in a world where Nature, though producing many mice, produces but one elephant, at a birth—great men arise to stamp their character on their age and nation,—by their thoughts, the principles they enunciate, the institutions they establish, forming the minds and ruling the destinies of generations that walk above their graves. Such men England had in Latimer and Ridley, in the Puritans of a succeeding age, and in those bold Barons of an earlier era who wrung her Magna Charta from tyrant hands. Such a man Scotland had in Knox, whose grave, like his who also led forth a nation from the House of Bondage, is known to none, but whose life is felt and whose memory is honoured by his countrymen—to whatever shores their energy and education have carried them. Among these moulders of men and makers of public opinion the son of Rechab holds no mean place. No man ever stamped his own features more deeply on the mind of others. With a more enduring impression than can be made on iron or on granite, his descendants took their cast and character from him ; religiously observing for three hundred years at least, and for how many more I know not, the two customs he imposed on them—a nomade life and abstinence from all intoxicating drinks.

The instructions of Jonadab to his children, in conformity to which, since example is better than precept, he probably shaped his own practice, were these, as recorded in the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah ; “ We will drink no

wine," said his tribe, "for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever : neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any : but all your days ye shall dwell in tents." Thus steadfastly adhering to a practice which the founder of their house had enjoined, and age had made venerable in their eyes, the Rechabites answered Jeremiah, pushing away the cup he offered. Though not without God's sanction, and indeed in obedience to his express directions, the prophet had put these stout men and their stern principles to no ordinary test. It was in the very temple and house of God the wine was offered. It was poured out by the hand of one of his most pious servants. He was a prophet of the Most High God who invited them to drink—what, apart from the prohibition of Jonadab, they probably had no objection to use. How natural in these circumstances for them to say—That cannot be forbidden which is offered in holy vessels, nor wrong to which a prophet invites ! Yet they put aside the cup, saying, "We have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters." Happy family !—of how few, if any, of ours could it be said ?—in which for three hundred years there had never been a drunkard to break a mother's heart, to bring shame on those who loved him, to fill a dishonoured grave ? Such was Jonadab's—and such how many sad mourners wish that theirs had been ! However people may, or may not, think it duty to set the

example, and rear their children up in the customs of the Rechabites, they cannot but admit and admire the wisdom of this man. Holding prevention to be better than cure, and that, as all experience proves, it is much easier to keep people out of temptation than save them in it, Jonadab, while enjoining his descendants to drink no wine, seeks to protect them from temptation ; forbidding them, though they might have used the fruit of the vine in many other ways than drink, to plant a vineyard. Following his example, and for the same end, not a few parents educate their families in habits of the strictest temperance, in the use of no cup stronger than that

Which cheers, but not inebriates.

Christians may differ as to the path of duty in that matter. But the general lesson which Jonadab's injunction teaches is one, the truth and importance of which none will question. Peace of conscience and purity of life turn much more on our avoiding than resisting temptations. It is wiser, if it be possible, to flee than to fight them : a great truth taught us by a higher authority than Jonadab. It stands embodied in the Lord's Prayer, in that, not the least important of its petitions, Lead us not into temptation !

The second injunction of Jonadab was no less faithfully observed by his posterity. Types of man on this earth, and true representatives of Abraham—from whose loins they sprung, through Keturah, his second wife—they were strangers and sojourners in the land. Camping among the hills or grassy plains of Judah, they lived a

wandering life : a shepherd race, who moved about from pasture to pasture with the flocks that formed their wealth ; neither enervated by the luxuries, nor corrupted by the vices of cities. Virtuous in their habits, they were simple in their manners. Yet shrewd withal : quite able, which many are not, to hold fast their principles without riding them to the death. For example, notwithstanding their ancient customs, and the commandment of Jonadab, and their respect for his authority, they abandoned their tents ; and fleeing the open country, took refuge within Jerusalem when the Chaldeans invaded the land. God's laws admit of no exceptions. But, neither bigots nor fanatics, the Rechabites rightly judged that man's do ; and, as they were ready to dwell in houses when it would have been death to dwell in tents, they would have been equally ready, I have no doubt, to violate in the letter, though not in the spirit, the other law of Jonadab—to drink wine in a case of clear necessity, where its use was judged indispensable to the preservation of health or life.

As to the history of these two remarkable customs, it was probably the dissolute manners of his age which induced Jonadab to institute them. Considerations of expediency may make that a duty at one time which is not so at another. Medicine—to take an illustration from it—is not meat, yet the body is often in such an abnormal condition, so unhealthy, as to require its use ; and, when the air is charged with the subtle poison of disease, precautions which were superfluous in happier times are necessary to fortify us against its attacks. Such

were, perhaps, the grounds on which the son of Rechab acted. A sagacious and patriotic man, he probably instituted these customs to protect his family and their descendants from the general corruption of the age—the vices that reigned in cities, and the drunkenness that, prevailing everywhere, was undermining the prosperity and happiness, the health and lives of thousands. The principle on which he acted may be misapplied, yet the Bible sanctions and enforces it ; saying, Go thou and do likewise. Looking to the good of others, the glory of God, and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, Paul says—and the apostle's is a statement that admits of a wide application—All things are lawful for **me**, but all things are not expedient.

THE BLESSING ENJOYED BY THE RECHABITES.

There are few, if any, estates in our country now in possession of the direct, lineal male descendants of those who owned them three hundred years ago. Old families die out ; their properties pass into the hands of aliens, or of collateral heirs ; and whether it is a royal palace, or a noble's castle, or a simple mansion-house, the place that once knew them knows them no more. But for three whole centuries Jonadab the son of Rechab never wanted a man to stand up before the Lord. His descendants had seen successive dynasties on the throne ; ancient houses, crushed by misfortune, crumble into ruins ; honourable families sink into mean obscurity ; and many perish altogether in the course of time, and under the ravages of disease and wars. However, the changes

that swept away these had but swept over them, as the waves over a rock which, so soon as they have burst, emerges firm and fixed from the cloud of spray. A remarkable result, certainly, and one which becomes remarkably instructive when we look to its causes. These belong both to Heaven and earth; in other words, this result is due both to the Divine blessing and to the action of certain natural agents.

First, their wandering habits, their life passed in the open country and in tents, was calculated to preserve and prolong the existence of this family. No mode of life is perhaps so accordant with our natural instincts as was theirs. It offered, as they roamed from pasture to pasture, constant change of scenery, and in that the greatest pleasure of travelling—a balm to grief, a perpetual feast to man's love of novelty, and an innocent stimulant of equal advantage to mind and body. How strong the attractions of such a life are admits of many illustrations. Let me adduce two—the one a curse, the other a fact. The curse is one employed by the Tartars, themselves nomades, a wandering shepherd race. The only one, indeed, they are accustomed to use, it proves how much people reared to a roaming life come to love it, and how miserable they think any other—the direst wish which a Tartar pronounces against his enemy being, *May you live in one place, and work like a Russian!* And the fact that proves the charms of such a life is the all but insuperable difficulty of weaning gipsies and other such wanderers from their old habits, notwithstanding the extreme hardships they entail in our uncertain climate.

I knew a boy, for instance, belonging to this race, whom his parents had been induced to leave with a kind, Christian family, under whose roof he enjoyed many advantages—a comfortable home, good and regular meals, instruction in letters and in habits of honest industry. Yet, notwithstanding these, and after being to appearance tamed, so strong were the charms of his old life that he seized the first opportunity of returning to it, like the young chamois which a shepherd of the Alps caught, and, hanging a bell from its neck, reared with his goats. It seemed to be quite domesticated ; going and returning with the herd, till a day when it happened to hear the cry of its old wild race amid the mountain rocks. The creature started, and listened. For some moments it stood in an attitude of eager attention, trembling with intense excitement ; and then, all of a sudden bounding from the meadow, it sprung into the cliff, and leaping from crag to crag, vanished among the heights where it joined its kindred, and was never more seen ; though for years thereafter its bell was often heard tinkling among the rocks, and the mists that shrouded them.

The most consonant, as it thus appears, a wandering life is to our natural instincts, it is on that and many other accounts the most conducive to good health, and long life, and the permanent existence of such families as practise it—at least in a climate so fine and under circumstances so favourable as those of the Rechabites were. Towns have many advantages ; and who would find the highest types of man, intellectually, morally, or spiritually, must seek them among citizens. Yet through

their luxurious and unnatural habits of life, the wear and tear and turmoil of business, their vitiated air, and especially their vices, towns are great devourers of human life. They waste it ; nor, as statistics prove, could large cities increase, or even keep up their numbers, without a constant immigration from rural districts. Men get dwarfed, dwindle away, and die, more or less like many trees, amid the smoke of towns ; and there can be no doubt that the tented life and roaming habits of the Rechabites, under the genial skies and amid the pleasant scenes of Palestine, materially contributed, under the blessing of God, to preserve their race.

But, secondly, there can be as little doubt that their habits of temperance, carried to the extent of what is called Total Abstinence, so far as natural causes were considered, contributed also, and still more, to the same result. It is certain that the strongest man the world has seen drank nothing stronger than water. His cup was filled at the crystal spring ; and it was water, not wine, the bloody jaw-bone yielded to restore his strength. Though Samson's was undoubtedly a case out of the common course of nature, he may have owed his strength in some measure to his abstinence. It is a well-established fact, at any rate, that the ancient athletes, as do their modern successors who engage in pedestrian, wrestling, fighting feats, rigorously abstained from the use of stimulants ; regarding them as not fitted to increase, but to impair their strength. And whatever reasons people may find for the use of these, there is no doubt that the simpler our fare, if nutritious, the better—those

having most chance of enjoying robust health, long life, and a green old age, who follow the habits of the Rechabites, and abjure all intoxicants. I could prove that ; but that needs no proof which the highest medical authorities affirm, and no well-informed, impartial man attempts now-a-days to deny. Thus in those customs which distinguished the descendants of Rechab from others, we find two causes that help to account for the fact that while other families perished from the face of the earth, they endured—evergreen and immortal in their virtues ; flourishing amid the nation's decay ; defying alike all changes of fortune, the ravages of disease, and the arm of death, to extirpate and extinguish them.

I see more, however, in the story of the Rechabites than a testimony to the advantages of simple manners and sober habits, in favour of what an eminent medical authority called the three great physicians, namely, Air, Exercise, and Water. It was not the material or moral advantages which they found in these simple and temperate habits—though they might have urged these—which they gave to Jeremiah as their reasons for declining his invitation. “We will drink no wine,” they said. And why? They did not say, Because we think it a sin ; nor because we, who do not use it, enjoy robuster health, longer lives, clearer heads, lighter hearts, and heavier purses than those who do ; nor because we stand in fear that our example might lead some to use wine who would not or could not do so without abusing it. The simple ground on which they placed their refusal was the respect they felt and the obedience they

owed to parental authority. They say, "for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us ;" and again, "Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab in all that he hath charged us." It was on this account that they, on the one hand, preserved the custom of their ancestors, and on this account also, on the other hand, that God preserved them—saying, by the mouth of Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you : therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."

It is a dull ear which does not catch in these words an echo, as from the rocks of Sinai, of the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Eminent examples of filial piety, how might that law have been inscribed, as their appropriate motto, on the banners of the house of Rechab? Living in remarkable accordance with its precept, they were a remarkable monument to the truth of its promise. Distinguished from all around them by their superior respect for parental authority, they were equally distinguished by their happier fortune ; while others perished, their days were long upon the land which the Lord their God had given them. That law is one of the Ten which, written by God's own finger, and spoken in thunder tones by his own awful voice, were separated and distinguished

from those Mosaic ordinances, the shadows of good things to come, that were buried in the grave of Christ. Like the other nine it was fulfilled, not interred, by the Redeemer. Like all other parts of the Decalogue, it is of permanent authority; and God is still making good its promise in the well-doing, the health and wealth and prosperity of thousands who honoured their parents however humble they might be, cherished them, and yielded to father and mother the reverence that was their due.

“My son,” says Solomon, “hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.” No man ever found himself the worse for taking that advice, nor is there a circle however limited but can show cases illustrative of the blessing that follows honour paid to father and mother. But, leaving these, let me adduce an example of this on a scale of no ordinary grandeur. There is a nation which numbers both more people and more years than any other on earth, ancient or modern, dead or living. The Chinese—for of them I speak—can trace their national existence to a period not far removed from the days of Noah. They appear in the dawn of history and earliest ages of antiquity; cultivating the arts when our forefathers, and those of all other existing nations, were barbarians. Unchanged amid perpetual and universal change, they saw the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires rise and fall, flourish and decay; and now, a teeming population, they this day cultivate the very fields their ancestors

ploughed when the story of the flood was fresh, and men, who heard it from the lips of Noah or his sons, told how the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep were opened. Now, though Pagans, two peculiarities have distinguished the Chinese from other pagan nations. Unlike the Greeks, the natives of Hindoostan, the Romans, and other heathens, they, though practising vice, have never deified it; and, secondly, they have placed reverence for parents, and obedience to their authority, at the head of all the virtues. When parents die their children even worship them; and while they live, yield such blind submission to their will that there is hardly a crime a child will not commit at their bidding. Filial reverence, in fact, is the redeeming and prominent feature of their character—one that has distinguished them as much from the nations which they have seen grow up and perish, as the oval contour of their heads and oblique position of their eyes. The connection between a national virtue and a national vitality so remarkable, I cannot regard as altogether accidental—one of the curious coincidences that occasionally occur. Illustrating in their lives the precept, they also illustrate in their fortunes the promise, of the Fifth Commandment; so that, from this nation, numerous above all others for its population, and venerable above all others for its hoar antiquity, I seem to hear the words God sounded forth from Sinai, “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

As unquestionably illustrating and enforcing this com-


mandment, the history of the Rechabites at any rate is at all times instructive, and in these times peculiarly seasonable. Our age has its peculiar features ; but reverence for authority is certainly not one of them. Indeed it bodes ill for our country, and for the future fortunes of America especially, not that kings are no longer “hedged round with divinity,” but that a father’s word does not carry the weight, nor his presence command the respect, which once belonged to them. The age is out of joint. Children are little men and little women. Whether it be due to a system of education that, like a hot-house, unduly forces the growth of youth, or to that early independence which children attain through the manufactures and machinery that yield them wages sufficient for their support, or to the operation of political and ecclesiastical causes ; whether it be due to one, or to another, or to all these influences combined, the tendency of this age is to throw off authority, Divine as well as human. The daring manner in which many treat sacred things—boldly intruding within the veil of the temple, sitting in presumptuous judgment on God’s character, questioning his providence, setting limits to his authority, handling his inspired Word as they would the pages of a common history, and by their own little line measuring Him who hath measured out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth,—these are the developments of a spirit which begins by disowning the authority of man, and ends by disowning that of God. When filial reverence is lost, and, despising the judgment of the wise and venerable,

men say, "Let us break their bonds, and cast their cords from us," it looks like the beginning of the end. The rent that goes through the hearth-stone has a tendency to extend itself into the foundations of all social order and true piety. Who does not reverence a father on earth is not likely to reverence our Father in heaven. Who does not love a mother will not love Jesus Christ. Let the subject be looked into, and I dare to say it will be found that there is a far closer connection than what lies in their being printed on the same page and embraced in the same verse, between the two great clauses of this beautiful commandment, *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of an old man, and fear thy God.* In the words of the hymn,

A father's voice with reverence **we**
On earth have often heard ;
The Father of our spirits **now**
Demands the same regard.

UNFORGIVING AND UNFORGIVEN.

PART I.

“URDER will out,” is a common saying, whereby people mean that though that crime is ~~one~~ seldom committed in the presence of witnesses, or to be proved otherwise than by circumstantial evidence, God takes special care to bring it to light, and such as commit it to justice. The fact that it has been often revealed in a very remarkable way is known to all. Many cases are on record where the finger of Providence seemed pointed at the murderer, and circumstances turned up which said, as plainly as the prophet Nathan, Thou art the man! Indeed, one can hardly read a trial for murder without meeting something in the evidence so strange, so unlooked-for, so unexpected, and yet so important for the ends of justice, as to impress us with a sense of a presiding Providence, and of there being more than a vulgar superstition in the saying, “Murder will out.” Though they had no claims to be classed with the *Causes Célèbres*, I myself have met with two cases of the kind.

In one case the crime was committed by a wandering gipsy. He had killed his wife, in a lone *corrie* of the Grampians, counting, no doubt, that, buried below the winter snows, and bleached by the sun and wind and summer rains, the body, ere it was discovered, would be a withered skeleton—not to be recognised by the mother who bore it. Yet her blood was hardly dry on the heather, nor had the raven ventured from his perch on an old mountain ash, where he sat whetting his beak and croaking over the corpse, when some smugglers, who were seeking to elude the revenue officers by taking the wildest bypaths over the hills, came on the body. Rough men, and not slack, if brought to bay, to make their bludgeons ring on the heads of the excise, they were horrified at the spectacle, and hastened to raise the alarm. Up rose the hue and cry ; and the body being recognised as that of a woman whom some had seen the day before lying on the hill-side in company with a man that others had met pushing on by himself for the low country, he became an object of suspicion, and also of an active pursuit. They traced him for miles down into Strathmore, and to a village inn where he had spent the night. Here, as when the hounds start a fox, and the whole pack, giving tongue as the prey breaks cover, set off at his heels, the people learned what, removing all doubt of their being on the right track and after the right man, quickened the pursuit. According to the landlady, he whom they had traced to her house, and who had left it but a few hours before, had conducted himself there in a strange, mysterious way. His bed-room was right above

her own ; and, through the live-long night, depriving her of sleep, he had paced the floor overhead with heavy step—deep groans mingling from time to time with the tramp of his restless foot. Each of these steps was a step to the gallows. In the judgment of those who had taken up the pursuit they proved him the murderer as plainly as if they had left bloody footprints on the floor. Abandoning now all intention of giving up the chase, they resumed it with renewed vigour ; and in a few hours more the man was in the hands of justice, betrayed by the guilty horrors of his own conscience. However, as there were none there to identify him, and as he gave some feasible explanation of his suspicious behaviour in the inn, he was set free, but not to go off like a shot from a gun, with the speed of one who, to use a common but expressive saying, “had rubbed shoulders with the gallows.” For some hours the ruffian circled about the spot, as we have seen a moth in an autumn evening about the candle, till it plunges to perish in the flame. “Murder will out.” Contrary to what might reasonably have been expected of a man in his circumstances, like one stricken of God with a blind infatuation, he hovered about the place. He was again seized ; and afterwards was tried, condemned, and hanged. I saw him in the dock in Edinburgh ; and who that has seen, amid the awful silence of a crowded court, a man stand up, while his pale features work convulsively and his fingers clutch the bar, to hear his doom from the trembling voice of a fellow mortal, can forget a scene so awfully suggestive of the last great judgment, and the despair of those

who, clinging to Christ's feet, are dragged away to everlasting punishment !

The other case was one connected with my old country parish. Though the respective rights of the heritors on the one hand, and the minister, or incumbent, on the other, over the church and churchyard are not very distinctly defined, yet, where there is no interference on the part of the landed proprietors, who in Scotland are bound by law both to build and uphold all the ecclesiastical edifices, the control of the church and churchyard is vested in the minister. This in old times was expressed, not in words but in symbol, at his induction, when the keys of the parish church were publicly and formally committed to his hands. Therefore it was that one summer-day I had a visit from a sheriff's officer, or, as some of these officials are called, a "messenger-at-arms," who presented a warrant requiring me to allow a grave in the churchyard to be opened, and the body to be exhumed and examined. It was the grave of a woman who had resided elsewhere ; but, being a native of my parish, had been brought there to be buried, that, in conformity with a very old as well as common feeling, she might be gathered to her fathers—that her dust might mingle with that of her kindred. Since the funeral, which had taken place six weeks before, rumours had begun to float about that she had got foul play ; and her husband, to whom all the suspicions pointed, had been thrown into jail under the charge of murder. The officer, whose warrant, though shocked by the circumstances and sure that this meddling with the dead would greatly shock

the people, I was ready to obey, was speedily followed by other officials and the doctors. They came prepared to examine the body for marks of violence or poison. The news flew like wild-fire through the quiet village beside which my manse, the church, and the churchyard stood. It was thrown into an uproar, the natural horror that people feel at disturbing the dead being much aggravated by the outrages which the *resurrection men*, as they were called—those who rifled graves at the dead of night to supply bodies for dissecting-rooms—were at that time committing on the tenderest feelings of humanity. I believe I incurred some odium by my willingness to aid in the investigation: at any rate, none else would furnish utensils or render any assistance—the few whose curiosity overcame their horror standing far apart as we broke into the house of the dead. The only help obtained was the use of an old empty barn, without which indeed it would have been hardly possible to have examined the body. It was the height of summer; the day was bright and hot; and I remember well, when the coffin was raised, and the lid forced open, how the whole air seemed instantly filled with a cloud of blow-flies that settled down in thick black swarms on the corpse. On the face-cloth being thrown back and the body unswathed, the spectacle was one, if anything short of divine grace could do it, to humble vanity and the pride of personal charms; nor shall I ever forget, as I stood at her feet looking on while one of the doctors, with mallet and chisel, was opening the skull, how the dead

woman, as if she recognised me, nodded her head at every blow.

On relating that he had gone to see a criminal die under the guillotine, and how he had watched the whole affair with an opera-glass, Lord Byron says it is well to see such things once : and, however repulsive the spectacle, when I have seen some pretty but vain, silly woman come vapouring with mincing steps and haughty air into the house of God, not to worship, but to be worshipped, I have thought it would be well that such people, for once at least, saw what they are to become. Nor am I singular in that. It is told of an Italian friar, one of Rome's great Lent preachers—a class of men who often subdue their audience into tears, and by vivid descriptions of hell and purgatory throw women into fainting-fits and men into convulsions—that denouncing on one occasion “the lust of the eye and the pride of life,” he fixed his large, black, brilliant eyes on a proud beauty who sat before him, and drove the colour off her cheek. Taking a grinning skull from out the folds of his cloak, he suddenly held it up before her face, to say, See what thou shalt be ! There is no sin in admiring beauty. Not the devil, but He gave it who made Eve lovelier, I believe, than the fairest of her daughters ; and, whether in the human face and form, or in beast, bird, and beetle, or in the flowers of the field and the gorgeous tints of the evening sky, gave it to be admired, gave it to minister to our happiness and pleasure. The sin lies in worshipping it, setting a too high value on it, feeling proud of possessing it ! or, if a woman is plain, envying such as are

pretty, and feeling displeased with God for making us what we are. Such a sight as the secret of that grave disclosed was well calculated, with God's blessing, to abase vanity in the dust, mortify pride, and crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. In that "chamber of horrors" how much to be preferred to a beauty which could turn into loathsomeness, to charms which the hand of death had so horribly defaced, appeared what the apostle calls "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit ; which is in the sight of God of great price."

But there we saw something more shocking than the poor unlovely remains—evidences of death cruelly inflicted by the very hand which, in other days, had held that cold hand, when pledges of love were passed and vows were taken to be faithful "till separated by death." The viscera showed unmistakeable evidence of the presence of arsenic—a substance which, unlike vegetable poisons, remains in the body to be, as lawyers say, a *damning* witness of crime ; and which also, being a powerful antiseptic, or corrective of putrefaction, actually preserves the body, whose life it destroys, to speak out at the bidding of the chemist, and convict the murderer of his crime. In many cases of murder, and especially in those where arsenic is administered, the proverb is not true—"Dead men tell no tales." Murder will out, I said to myself, as the knife laid bare another and another red patch on the organs of digestion, betraying the action of a deadly poison. But the truth came out sooner than we expected ; and more clearly than might possibly have

been the result of a chemical analysis. While we were examining the body, the husband was otherwise occupied. Left in his lonely cell, to the worst of company—a guilty conscience, he had taken alarm on hearing that doctors and officers of justice had gone to exhume and examine the body of his wife. There was nothing remarkable in the circumstance that I should have been the last preacher he had heard, but it was a remarkable coincidence that my text on that occasion should have been so ominous of his fate, and appropriate to his case. Unknown to preachers, God may often be directing them when they take an arrow at random from the quiver and draw the bow at a venture in the pulpit. Whether I shook the sense of security he had been entertaining that, as his victim had been now six weeks in the grave, the fatal secret was safely buried with her till the day of doom, or whether I had roused a sleeping conscience and made a coward of him, I know not; but, curious coincidence, to say the least, my text was the words with which the first murderer sought, but vainly, to hide his crime: these, to wit, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” On their return, the doctors and law-officers found themselves saved all further trouble. There was no need for the first analyzing the contents of the bottles in which they had carried off portions of the body, nor for the second collecting evidence and preparing a case for the crown. The man was found dead in his cell. He had anticipated the executioner: had cheated the gallows, as they say—by hanging himself. Judas-like, he precipitated his fate; and, adding the

crime of suicide to that of murder, was found hanging there, a proof that "Murder will out," and an awful evidence also of the Scripture truth, "The ways of transgressors are hard."

Such cases are calculated to produce a sense of a pre-siding Providence on all minds, but especially on those of the common people, who, as in the days when they heard Jesus gladly, though less learned, often form sounder opinions on moral and religious subjects than those called their "betters." And it was to the deep and solemn feeling produced by such cases, and which, in the common people, as appeared on the occasion I am about to refer to, may be more or less tinged with superstition, that I owed a visit, paid me late in a November afternoon, when residing for some time in a part of the country which I had visited years before. The person who waited on me had left the death-bed of an old woman in a cottage in the neighbourhood; and knowing that I was a minister of the gospel, she came to ask me to return with her. It was a peculiar, and in her judgment as well as in that of some others who kindly watched with her, also a "frightsomeness" and mysterious one. She had stood by many a dying bed, but never by one like it. The woman was dying, and yet could not die; nor, impatient and wearied of the long struggle, could succeed in putting an end to herself—though, awful to relate, they had more than once detected her attempting it. The closing scene, which usually occupies two or three hours, before the curtain falls and all is over, had been prolonged in her case over as many days; and seemed no nearer an end

than ever. At first astonished, then puzzled and perplexed, she and other two women who watched with her had at length got frightened. The case was *by common*; and they had no other explanation of it to offer but the conviction which had taken strong possession of them, that this old dying woman had an awful load of guilt upon her conscience, and that, having in bygone days committed some of those great crimes which God brings to light in unexpected ways, she was not to be allowed to die till she confessed her guilt—making good the old adage that “Murder will out.”

It happened, as will appear in the course of the narrative, that I had become acquainted with the person whose strange mode of dying had given birth to such horrible suspicions, long years before this time: having known her when I was a boy, and renewed my acquaintance with her afterwards under circumstances of which I had a vivid and painful recollection. She had met with her full share of misfortunes, and was dying in much poorer circumstances than once she lived in. But, judging from her state of mind the last time we met, calamity had done as little to humble her haughty heart as age to bend her erect and imposing figure. When she lost her property, she retained all her pride; and, though it was beautifully lighted up when she smiled, it was easy for one quite ignorant of physiognomy to discover in her face, its firm mouth and strongly marked lines of determination, and in those grey eyes that sometimes flashed from under their shaggy eyebrows, evidences of an iron will as well as of a fiery temper. Like a lonely tree, the hoar and

aged remnant of an ancient forest, she had outlived all her early companions : having survived to see succeeding generations, and among them all her children but one, of whom more afterwards, borne to the grave. But no early criminality, so far as I had heard, ever attached itself to her name ; yet I knew enough of her to believe that she would have stuck at almost nothing rather than brook public shame ; and that, presented with a powerful temptation, she was capable of proving one of those, happily rare, women who have nerve for deeds that most men are too great cowards to attempt—whom Shakspeare represents in the *Lady Macbeth* of his drama, whom Scotland in our day produced in Miss —, and England in Mrs. Manning, sitting brisk and lively at the tea-table, with her feet resting on the hearth-stone below which lay the still fresh and bloody form of the paramour she had murdered and buried there. The truth is, that while both men and women stand in continual need of the constraining and restraining grace of God, women make more profit of it, and suffer greater loss by the want of it than men. As the sweetest wines turn into the sourest vinegars and the hottest climates develope in plants and animals the most deadly poisons, so women, with their warm impulses and impassioned tempers, when they become bad, become very bad. In the hands of the Spirit of God, as witness the group by the Cross, they grow into the bravest and most beautiful saints ; while in the hands of the devil, as witness Jezebel, and Athaliah, and Herodias' mother, they appear perfect fiends—in fact we could not describe them better than

in the words which describe the prophet's figs, "The good are very good; the bad are so bad that they cannot be eaten."

However that may be, and whatever this poor woman might once have been capable of doing or been left to do, I was unwilling, even though I had been superstitious enough to be able, to entertain the suspicions which her strange death-bed had produced in others. Hoping to smooth the thorns of a dying pillow, to guide aright the steps of one who was struggling so hard to get through the dark valley, I agreed to my visitor's request, and soon followed her—but by a short bye-road through a ravine, where I thought I could trust myself to find the way. The period of the year and the scene were in unison with my feelings as I set out on this melancholy errand. The year was drawing to its close. The day itself was dying, fast sinking into darkness. There was hardly light enough to see the footpath which followed the wanderings of a winding stream, that now lost itself under over-hanging banks, and now flashed out, reflecting in its quiet pools the last lights of evening. The white stones that stood up among the rank grass of an old burying-ground which I had to pass, presented in the dim light of the *gloamin'* a weird and spectral look. The shattered towers and gables of an old feudal castle looked grimly down from the summit of a neighbouring rock; turning my thoughts on the brave lords and gay ladies who had long left them to moulder to dust in the quiet grave-yard below, and recalling to memory these quaint lines:—

The knights are dust,
Their swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints we trust.

Thickly strewn with withered leaves that rustled and crackled under my feet, the pathway itself was associated with solemn thoughts of mortality ; and as the night wind sighed and groaned among the naked branches, and the sea came moaning from the bar which the stream had thrown up at its mouth, I felt in a mood to think that it was Nature mourning over the sufferings of her children—the voice of one that, according to the words of Scripture, “groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now.”

A little while, and I had found my way to the cottage door ; but the scenes I saw, and the lessons I learned there, must be left to form the subject of another paper.

UNFORGIVING AND UNFORGIVEN.

PART II.

FEAR not snow-drift driving fast,
Sleet, or hail, or levin blast ;
Soon the shroud shall lap thee fast,
And the sleep be on thee cast
That shall ne'er know waking.

Haste thee, haste thee, to be gone :
Earth flits fast, and time draws on,—
Gasp thy gasp, and groan thy groan,
Day is near the breaking.



HE cottage, to resume my tale, which I at length reached—and where they who watched a dying bed muttered to each other, “She cannot pass away with that on her mind, it tethers her here”—like others of the same class, was thatched with straw. On each side of the door stood a window, the lower panes of which were filled with wood instead of glass ; an arrangement which an Englishman, who gives an account of his travels in Scotland early in the seventeenth century, mentions as common not only in the best houses of Edinburgh at that period, but in Holyrood Palace itself. These

wooden panes indicated something else than Scotch poverty. Hung on hinges, they admitted of being opened ; an arrangement that explains a line in an old popular song, and was well adapted for sanitary purposes. How often have I wished for them when breathing the foul, pestilential air of Edinburgh's Cowgate and Grass-market tenements !—the loss of light they caused being more than compensated by the free admission they gave to the fresh breath of heaven. The cottage of the woman to whose strange death-bed I had been summoned, consisted of two apartments, called the *but* and the *ben*, and a small closet. The first was that in daily use, where the household work was done, the family ate as well as prepared their meals, and also slept, till it grew so large as to overflow into the *ben*. That, the best-furnished of the two, sometimes boasting a chest of drawers, polished chairs, and an eight-day clock, was commonly reserved for the accommodation of visitors, and for great occasions—festive meetings, baptisms, marriages, and such like. The floor of the *but* was clay : its fire-place an open one, where the fuel, chiefly peat, or furze, or logs of wood, burned on the hearth-stone, while the smoke, though partly straying into the room, where it hung in dun folds and coated the bare rafters with a black, lustrous varnish, went curling up a chimney so spacious that you could sit with your feet at the fire, and study the stars overhead. These dwellings were simply, perhaps I should say, often meanly furnished. Yet, the abodes of an educated, shrewd, and pious peasantry, there were few of them but had one or two shelves for books, where,

besides the Bibles and catechisms of the family, you would find Boston's "Fourfold State," Ambrose's "Looking unto Jesus," Willison's "Sacramental Meditations," a volume or two of John Owen; and along with them some old ballads, perhaps a cheap geographical dictionary, and a few other books of secular knowledge.

As calculated to increase the interest which, in these days, is felt in the Waldensian Church of Italy, that poorest, smallest, yet oldest true Church in Christendom, I may mention that I was often pleasantly reminded of this feature of the old Scotch peasantry during a visit I lately paid to its mountain homes. Take, for example, a cottage in one of its highest and wildest valleys. It was the home of one of the poor peasant proprietors, and stood near the celebrated rock of the Balsille, where Henri Arnaud, at the head of seven hundred gallant men, defied for six long, weary, wintry months the armies of France and Savoy—against these emissaries of Papal Rome, holding up a banner for the truth, and achieving prodigies of valour. My readers must understand that, though in "Sunny Italy," the inhabitants of these valleys have to face the storms and endure many of the rigours of an arctic winter; hardships greatly aggravated by their scanty stores both of food and fuel. Wood abounds in their noble forests; but the labour required to cultivate their patches of soil away up among the precipices, and on the steep slopes of the snow-crowned mountains, is such as to leave them little time to lay in a stock of fuel. Hence, half the inhabitants of the parish, where this cottage stood, though pro-

prietors of the lands they cultivate, sleep, and eat, and work for five months of the year in the lower storey of their houses, in company with their cattle, for the sake of the heat they give out. I grieved to see the members of this noble Church, the descendants of heroic martyrs, suffering such hardships, steeped to the lips in poverty; but how was my pity changed to astonishment and admiration? In the poor, bare house where I stood, I found a library of not less than thirty books, great and small; and among these, interesting to see and curious to tell, French translations of some of Ryle's tracts and Spurgeon's sermons. The Valdese, by this and many things else, reminded me of the old, poor but virtuous, intelligent, Bible-reading, Sabbath-keeping peasantry of Scotland—many of whom still exist, and whose character in connection with the subject of their dwellings, I would make a digression to free from ignorant and unmerited aspersions.

It has been fancied and asserted that where people live in such cottages as I have described, and found this woman dying in, the proprieties of life cannot possibly be maintained. Decency, it is said, must always be lost where a whole family live and sleep in one room. So many of our modern sanitarians and philanthropists allege; to use the words of Paul, "understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." I venture, on the contrary, to affirm from personal observation that many of the old Scotch peasants who lived in such circumstances would compare favourably in point of delicacy and decent habits with people in any rank of life,

or any country under the sun. Those who assume that it must have been otherwise, do so through their ignorance of the arrangements that obtained in these cottages, and especially of the merits and mysteries of what are called *box-beds*. This was an old invention, which no doubt owed its existence to those feelings of delicacy it at once gratified and preserved. These beds, let me explain, were so screened all round with a wooden framework, that when the sliding-doors by which they were entered were closed, the party within was completely concealed. Each such bed in the single apartment where the family slept was thus in fact a room within the room, and as much shut out from observation as if it had been a separate chamber in another quarter of the house. Being furnished within with shelves for clothes and other things, the persons inside these wooden walls could dress and undress with as delicate a regard to propriety as the Queen in her palace or a duchess in her dressing-room. And, since our poorer classes find it almost impossible to pay the rent demanded, especially in the large towns, for two or three apartments, and therefore herd together in a way offensive to decency and destructive of virtue, it might be well worth considering whether this old fashion might not be introduced among them with advantage. A simple device, which I saw in use in Brittany, where such beds are common, removes the chief objection to which they stand exposed. In that part of France where the natives, who speak not the French but a Celtic tongue, have preserved unchanged for five hundred

years, if not from the days of the Druids, the customs of their ancestors, you will see three or four such beds in one apartment. Made of beautiful walnut or cherry wood, polished like a mirror, and carved with considerable taste, they are ornamental rather than otherwise; and having a breadth of five or six inches of open lattice-work at the top, they are constructed with an eye to fresh air as well as to those delicate proprieties of life, which, being germane to virtue and godliness, Sabbath sermons and Sunday magazines do well to recommend.

To return now to my story. It was in such a bed the woman whom I had been requested to visit lay a-dying. So soon as I entered the cottage her attendants hailed my appearance, expecting that she would now unburden her conscience, and get free to depart, and so drop the curtain on a scene that was one of pain to her, and terror to them. They hastened to announce my arrival. I heard her mutter something in reply, but could neither catch the words, nor see her face. There was no light but what, coming from the fire on the hearth, threw a feeble and ghastly glare over the room, and the forms and faces of her attendants; while, though its doors stood open, the pillow on which her head lay was cast into deep shadow by the fixed framework of the bed. Getting a candle lighted, I placed it on a shelf inside, where it shone full on the form and face of what looked much more like a dead than a living body. The countenance was singularly pallid; the nose pinched sharp; the eyes deeply sunk in their sockets; the features firm and

rigid ; and the brow, from which I put back some grey dishevelled locks, felt chill and clammy. The only sign of life was in the eyes, which, though partially glazed with a film, followed all my movements ; strangely, I may say horribly, mingling the features of life and death, giving to the body the appearance of an animated corpse. I did not wonder much, knowing the common superstitions of the country, that those who watched her had got nervous, and possessed with the notion that some dreadful crime lay heavy on her conscience, which she must reveal ere the spirit was allowed to leave its mortal tabernacle. For a few moments I silently contemplated the solemn sight ; and on waking from my reverie, found the attendants standing close by my side. During those years which I spent so happily as a country minister, I was often annoyed on my visits to the dying by the neighbours, no doubt with the best intentions, pouring into the house—crowding the room. The practice was inconsiderate, depriving of fresh air one who was, perhaps, with heavy lift of chest and shoulders, gasping for breath. Besides, it altogether prevented or interfered with free and confidential intercourse—that intercourse which, though far removed from the secrets of a Roman Catholic confessional, often affords relief to the mind of the dying, and to the minister of the Gospel a precious opportunity of saving a soul, or soothing a troubled spirit. It might be that the female attendants here in crowding round the bed had no curiosity, but were merely following what, when the minister of a rural parish, I had found to be a very common custom. However, if there

was any ground for their suspicions, and some secret crime was to be revealed, it was more likely to be divulged to my ear alone than in their hearing. So I asked them to retire, which they did with some reluctance, taking seats by the fireside. Left alone, I now addressed myself to the dying woman; and, approaching the matter with the utmost delicacy, was not long in finding that she had no murder or **any such** crime to disclose—a circumstance which, **in justice to her**, I let the nurses know.

Yet death-beds that have revealed dreadful crimes have been less dreadful than hers. In all my experience as a minister, I never stood by one so appalling. I had seen people dying in many and very different frames of mind—some in callous indifference, others in eager anxiety crying, What shall I do to be saved? some despondent, others full of hope; not a few **with** their heads pillowed on Jesus' bosom, enjoying a calm and blissful peace; one or two, in an ecstasy, in celestial transports, rejoicing in the Lord and soaring away up to glory on the wings of song. Here, this woman was dying in "the blackness of darkness." Standing on the deck, I have seen a drowning man, to whom a life-buoy was thrown across the roaring waters, catch it in his arms, and I have seen a man on his death-bed seize with equal eagerness and cling with as strong a hold to the hope of a Saviour, of a free, full, gracious pardon through the blood of Christ. I made that offer to this dying woman, and, though hanging on the brink of a **lost eternity**, she rejected it—cast it from her. She was

no sceptic ; had never read a line of Tom Paine or Voltaire. Nor was her mind diseased, in the proper sense of the term. It is indeed hard to say how dying people may comport themselves when under delirium. I remember the case of a sweet young girl in my country parish, from whose lips, quite unaccustomed to oaths or any improper language, there came rolling forth, as if she had been possessed of a devil, volleys of fearful imprecations. But no fever was disordering this woman's brain. She was coherent, calm, collected. So far as concerned her mental faculties, her sun was setting without a cloud. But what a cloud otherwise rested on her troubled spirit ! She neither could nor would entertain a hope of salvation—putting away from her all my offers of a Saviour. I prayed for her ; I pleaded with her ; but only to get such answers as reminded me of the request of that evil spirit who implored our Lord to let him alone, nor “ torment him before his time.” Despair had her in his ruthless grasp ; and a darkness deeper than what was gathering around her bed, lay on her soul. Still, when I thought how long she had been a-dying, for how many days death had strangely lingered by the door, I hoped it might be for a gracious purpose ; and that, called at the eleventh hour, her case might yet prove one where Christ saves at the uttermost. To me, as to His servant of old, God might be saying, “ Pray not for her.”—“ She is joined to her idols, let her alone.” Yet I clung to the hope that death had delayed to strike, because, bending in pity over this wretched creature, God in heaven was saying, “ How shall I give thee up,

Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled altogether. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger . . . for I am God, and not man!" So I hoped, continued to hope; waiting, watching, as they that watch for the morning. But, alas! there came no change. At parting, I took her cold hand in mine, and bent over her to ask, if she could cherish a hope? But—as if the pains of the damned had already begun, her only answer was to gnash her teeth, and look up in my face with an expression of despair, which long haunted, and even still sometimes haunts me. She "died, and gave no sign."

If my acquaintance with this unhappy woman had begun, as it ended, there, I might have regarded hers as a case where the repeated rejection of all His gracious offers has provoked God to withdraw His Spirit, and leave sinners, as He left Pharaoh, to the hardness of their own hearts. For though, thanks be to a loving and long-suffering God, these words hold generally true,—

As long as life its term extends,
Hope's blest dominion never ends;
For while the lamp holds on to burn,
The greatest sinner may return—

cases occur from time to time to prove the extreme danger of continued impenitence and procrastination. Like the lurid clouds which thunder, and flash-out lightnings from the blessed sky, there are, mingled with the

gracious words of Scripture, awful and ominous intimations—such as, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man”—such as, “Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand. . . . For the Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work ; and bring to pass His act, His strange act. Now, therefore, be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong,”—such as, “Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.” Let none therefore venture to keep Christ waiting at the door—till he come who knocks, not to request, but to demand admittance. When that happens, no Saviour may be nigh, lingering there : nor when the soul, alarmed at the appearance of the King of Terrors, flies to the gate of mercy, may there be any other answer to its cry, Open and let me in, than this, The door is shut !

And who shut it in this case ? It was not God. I am sure of that. He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but is willing rather that all should turn and live. Sin is suicidal ; and in this, as in every other instance, such as are barred out of heaven, have only themselves to blame. But the peculiarity of this case lay here, that, strange to say it, the means by which **this**

woman destroyed herself, plunged her soul into perdition, was her prayers—and that very prayer which, taught by Jesus to His disciples for a very different purpose, she had learned from a mother's lips, and in the days of sweet childhood had often lisped at a mother's knee. Like, I fear, not a few others, every time, in church or elsewhere, she had repeated the words, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," she had done worse than drive a nail into her coffin. Judging from that dreadful death-bed, God had taken her at her word. She had lived Unforgiving, and died Unforgiven.

Within the walls of that same cottage she and I had met in other years; and standing on that same floor, I had warned as with a prophet's tongue, had solemnly and affectionately warned, her of the very scene that I had now the pain to witness. It so happened that, years before, I had been asked by her daughter, a highly respectable woman, and her only surviving child, to mediate between her and her mother. Domestic differences about money matters, or something else, had grown and ripened into a bitter quarrel; and, after years of alienation, the daughter, who longed to be restored to a mother's affections, requested me to try if I could heal the breach. For this purpose I waited on the mother; but to find all my efforts coldly, resolutely, and at length even fiercely repelled. As ever happens in such cases, there were faults on both sides. But the mother, not satisfied with admitting none on hers, bitterly exaggerated her daughter's faults, and even where her conduct

admitted of a favourable, put none but an unfavourable and the worst construction on it. This shocked me. Still I did not abandon either hope or the attempt—having seen in other cases what a depth of affection is in a mother's heart, and how much more than anyone else a father or mother can forgive and forget. I attempted to mollify her—recalling the happy days when her daughter, a sweet infant, hung on her breast; lay nestled in her bosom; the joy of her heart and home, prattled at her knee. I reminded her of the long-suffering and love of God; of Him who shed his blood for his enemies, and, dying, forgave his murderers. With everything that could touch her conscience and wake the mother in her heart, I plied her; imploring her in the name of Christ: and by her hopes of salvation, to act a Christian part, and, pitying a daughter's sorrow, receive her back to her arms. Hard as the rock under whose shadow her cottage stood, she sat obdurate and unmoved. At length patience gave way; and yielding to what I felt to be a holy indignation, I rose to shake the dust from my feet, and warn her, since she refused to forgive, she need not hope to be forgiven in the hour of death and at the day of judgment. Now the hour had come when as she meted to others, it was meted to her again. Unforgiving, so far as man could judge, she was Unforgiven; hers, the only death-bed I have seen, during a ministry of six and thirty years, of blank and black despair. On going out, I found the whole firmament sparkling with stars, and a broad band of silver light cast on the sea by the rising moon, like a path that led from the moaning shore to distant, happier

worlds. A contrast, indeed, to the scene I had left!—a dying sinner around whose head a night had gathered without one ray of hope, and for whose departing spirit no bright way seemed to open to the gates of heaven.

Quarrels will arise between the dearest friends, and in the bosom of the most affectionate families. Would that the sun never went down on our wrath! and instead of being allowed to form deep, running sores, that discharge offensive humours, and, even when closed, leave ugly scars behind, would that all such wounds were healed by what surgeons call the “first intention!” But if this has not been done, let us beware of cherishing an unforgiving spirit. Of all states of mind, an implacable temper least becomes those who cannot themselves be saved but by a large measure of forgiveness, and is most unlike, and indeed plainly opposed to, the mind that is in Jesus Christ. It is sad, and much worse than merely sad, to see love turned into hatred, or warm affection into cold indifference. Nursing an unforgiving temper, making no honest and anxious attempt at reconciliation, repelling perhaps the efforts mutual friends make to heal the breach, every time, in church or elsewhere, we repeat the words, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,” we are mocking God; and pronouncing on ourselves the horrible imprecations, familiar to profane and brutal lips, with which I shall not shock my readers nor pollute these pages. Thankless as their office often proves, blessed are the peacemakers! But of all peacemakers, those are most blessed who humble the pride of

their own hearts in the dust, and, though the injured, stoop as Jesus stooped, to make the first overtures of reconciliation. Would that the tale I have told might warn some!—inducing them to take staff, or pen, in hand, to heal every unhappy quarrel with friend, or neighbour, or member of their family! Our Lord places such an effort at the head of all Christian duties. He gives it honourable precedence over prayers, and preaching, and sacraments, and the highest religious services. It is one a man should leave his pew in the church, should rise from the sacred table of communion, should get carried from his dying bed, to accomplish. “If,” says our Lord, “thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.” Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. **Unforgiving, is to be Unforgiven.**

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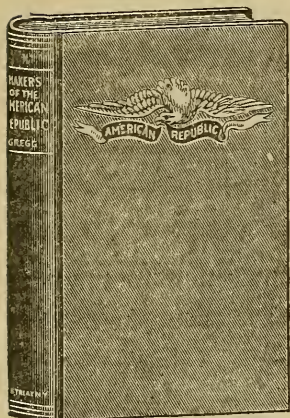
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sources relating to the day to be celebrated."—*Christian Advocate*.

**The Bench and Bar, as *Makers of the
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Pilgrims. By HON. W. W. GOODRICH, Presiding Jus-
tice Supreme Court, Appellate Division, State of New
York. 66 pages. With portraits. Boards, 50 cents.

E. B. TREAT & CO., Publishers, New York.



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